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This was a much valued companion, nearly 40 years ago, - mislaid & returned, to my great joy, another Vol. but. I trust not, to appear like another book.

H.K.

SOLITUDE SWEETENED;

OR,

MISCELLANEOUS MEDITATIONS

ON VARIOUS

RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS,

WRITTEN IN DISTANT PARTS OF THE WORLD.

BY JAMES MEIKLE,
LATE SURGEON AT CARNWATH.

Psal. cxxxix. 9, 10. If I take the wings of the morning, or dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

Psal. civ. 34. Of him my meditation shall be sweet.

THIRD AMERICAN EDITION.

ALBANY:

PUBLISHED BY C. DODGE, BOOKSELLER,
No. 78, State-Street.

E. & E. Hosford ... Printers.

1812.

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THE volume, entitled "Solitude Sweetened; or, Miscellaneous Meditations," by JAMES MEIKLE, is a work which cannot fail to give much pleasure to the pious mind. The author discovers a very happy talent in deducing from the phænomena of nature, and from the ordinary occurrences of life, much religious instruction, which he conveys in an animated and pleasing style. We should be glad to see an American edition of this work, and are persuaded, that if its worth were known, such an edition would meet with general encouragement.

SAMUEL MILLER,
JOHN B. ROMEYN.

New-York, Dec. 18, 1809.

WE, the subscribers, cordially recommend to the devout perusal of all Christians, the practical work of JAMES MEIKLE, entitled "*Solitude Sweetened;*" and sincerely hope that a second American Edition, which is contemplated, may receive liberal patronage.

CORNELIUS BOGARDUS
Pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church, Schenectady.
ALEXANDER MONTEITH,
Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Schenectady.

Schenectady, February, 1811.

PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

THE Meditations now offered to the Public appear in consequence of the very favourable manner in which the Author's "SELECT REMAINS" were received. They are written in the same style, and breathe the same spirit of ardent piety with the REMAINS; but they embrace a greater variety of subjects, are in general composed with greater care, and will, the Editor is persuaded, be found entitled to an equal, if not a superior degree of acceptance.

The greater part of them was written in the years 1757—1760, in the most unfavourable circumstances which can easily be conceived for study of any kind, and especially for religious meditation; not, like the "Monthly Memorial," and the "Secret Survey," amidst the quiet and comforts of home, in the retirement of the country, and during the intervals of leisure from the regular duties of his profession; but at sea, amidst the noise, and bustle, and confusion of a man of war. A book written during hostilities, on board a ship of war, may be considered as a literary curiosity; but this is perhaps the first book of devotion ever composed in such circumstances. It may justly excite surprise, how the good man could find opportunity, or command composure of mind, in the cock-pit of the Portland, for writing not only the greater part of the present volume, but another series of Meditations, entitled, *The Traveller;* and it must be particularly pleasing to pious minds, to observe his steadfastness in the faith unshaken, and the ardour of his devotion undiminished, during a period of several years spent in a state of exclusion from

the ordinances of religion, and in the society of persons ignorant of God. How " his righteous soul was vexed from day to day, in seeing and hearing, with their unlawful deeds," and to what ridicule he was exposed from his ungodly companions, on account of his religion, are apparent from many expressions in his meditations; yet he persevered in his course, frequently seized, when other opportunities failed, the midnight-hour for prayer and meditation, and " out of the belly of hell cried unto his God."

Two manuscripts have been found of the meditations composed at sea, both written by the Authors own hand. The first, which is the original draught, and which, owing to the rolling of the ship, and other inconveniences of his situation, is not very legible, is entitled by him, " A Mirror to the Sons of Affliction, by one who finds by experience, that it is better to go to the house of mourning than the house of mirth " The second, which has been chiefly followed in this edition, is a transcript of the former, but in a fairer hand, and with such corrections as occurred to the Author in his progress. This he appears to have begun in the year 1769, some time after his settlement in Carnwath; and having altered the title to that which the volume now bears, continued to add, during the remainder of his life, such meditations as appeared to him to correspond with the general title.

In a note prefixed to the manuscript, the Author says, " Fond of being at sea, he engaged to go —— in a ship that had a long voyage in view; but the scheme misgave, which gave him pain, and made him write Med. XI. The disappointment turned out a piece of kindness. O how blind is man! O how kind is heaven! In the Royal Navy, in time of war he wrote several of them. A groundless slander hurtful to him, though not of an immoral nature, was the occasion of his writing Med. XVIII. As what has happened to him may befal others, he hopes these few meditations, written for his own use, may be useful and acceptable to serious souls."

The Editor entertaining the same hopes, recommends them to the blessing of God, and to the acceptance of the saints. He hopes that the reception of the present volume will give encouragement to the

speedy publication of the other series of meditations, styled, THE TRAVELLER; to which, if God will, shall be prefixed, a Memoir of the Author's life, collected chiefly from the numerous manuscripts which he has left behind him.

JAMES PEDDIE.

EDINBURGH,
Nov. 25, 1803.

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SOLITUDE SWEETENED.

MEDITATION I.

ON MEDITATION.

THE heavenly meditant has the happiest life in the world, and the most enriching commerce with the celestial Indies, from whence he returns loaden with an unseen store of immortal joy, and spiritual consolation. As he continues to meditate on the great things of God, such amazing plenitudes are displayed before his eye, that he finds in the divine fulness sufficient subjects for meditation through eternity itself. Meditation, like the spies sent from Israel in the wilderness, returns with a good account of the good land, presents some of the fruits of paradise, and produces refreshing grapes pulled from the true VINE. Here the weary soul retires to rest in the bosom of the promise, in the love of God, in spite of all surrounding troubles; and drinks at the river before the throne, which makes her forget her miseries, as waters that flow away. O the high estate of the sons of God in meditation! They walk in the fields of glory, associate with the angels of light, and hold communion with God himself. Thus having been in the mount with God, their soul is beautified; thus, their face shines, and their conversation seems as if in heaven, nobly opposing the base practices of the men of the world.

O my soul! while mortals are combating for crowns below, meditate thou on thy crown above; view the beauties of the better country; ruminate on the happiness of the inhabitants there; think on the fulness of the heavenly glory; talk of the love of God, and dwell on the adorable excellencies of the divine Redeemer. This work is its own reward

and assimilates the soul to "the bright and morning Star." Be ashamed henceforth to occupy thyself in meditating how to raise thy fortune, how to make thyself famous, and how to plan thy lot in the world; this last commit to God, and cast the rest away: But let him, whose favour is better than life, be the object of thy love, and the subject of thy meditation! Thus shalt thou begin heaven, anticipate bliss, and prepare for eternity and glory.

MEDITATION II.

CHRIST THE ROCK IN THE WEARY LAND.

Let the travellers through the parched deserts of Arabia, tell how comforting the shadow of a cloud is, that diminishes the heat in a dry place. Let the travelling companies of Dedanim tell what it is to hide their scorched shoulders from the burning sun in the shadow of a rock. How much greater reason have I to boast of my Rock! for *their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.* From his pierced side the fountain of life flows, that pours refreshment into my panting soul. Here I have not only shadow from the heat, but shelter from the storm, when the blast of the terrible one is as a storm against the wall.

What is firmer than a rock? Winds may rend the cedars of Lebanon, and tear them up by their roots: but here the tempests beat, and are baffled; the billows dash, and are broken; time hovers, and corrodes not the flinty mass. Nevertheless, they are not proof against every invasion from destruction and ruin. For see, the enraged thunders rend their towering tops, and angry earthquakes toss them from their seats, while the earth beneath opens fearful, and hides the ponderous heaps. But my Rock shall stand fast for ever, when the foundations of the earth are moved, and the pillars of heaven tremble. There shall I be safe, when the hail shall sweep away the refuges of lies; yea, when God shall rain on sinners snares, fire, and brimstone, in the furious storm of wrath, I shall sing in safety, being an inhabitant

of the Rock of ages, from which I never shall remove. No wonder, then, that the saint of God shout for joy, being an inhabitant on high, and having for his place of defence the munition of rocks. Sometimes, indeed, the blind world is ready to allege, that their rock has sold them, and that if God were their God, surely he would awake for them; and in this they are strengthened, when they see martyrs guarded, through bemoaning crowds, to execution; some to the gibbet, and others to the sea-mark; some to the rack, and others to the fire; but then their divine Comforter invisibly attends, and he whose form is like the son of God walks with them amidst the fire, and fans away the flame. This is the Rock from which I am filled with honey, the Rock that pours me out rivers of oil.

Do rocks defend me from blasts, from whatever quarter they blow? So does my Rock.—Is the blast from hell? Well, he has the keys of hell and of death.—Is it from sin? He is my righteousness.—Is it from Satan? He has conquered principalities and powers. Is it from afflictions? He is my sympathising and feeling High Priest.—Is it from losses? He is my exceeding great reward.—Is it from crosses? He makes all things work together for good to his people.—Is it from anguish? He is my joy.—Is it from darkness? He is my Sun.—Is it from doubts? He is my Counsellor.—Is it from deadness? He is my life.—Is it from enemies? He is my shield.—Is it from temptation? He is my deliverer.—Is it from false friends? He will never leave me, nor forsake me.—Is it from solitude or banishment? He is every where present.—Is it from disease? He is my healer.—Is it from death? He is the resurrection and the life.—O glorious refuge! O sure defence! O everlasting munition! Here do I defy the worst that earth and hell can do. Henceforth will I tabernacle, by faith, in the MAN that is made of God an hiding-place from the storm, a covert from the tempest, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, till every blast blow over, not a threatening cloud appear in my sky, but my heaven be beautified with everlasting day, and the air in which I breathe be swept of every storm.

MEDITATION III.

IF GOD GIVE CHRIST, WHAT CAN HE WITHHOLD?

1757.

ARE believers in the valley of tears? Is their dwelling-place Bochim and Hadadrimmon? Well, mercy outstretches all their misery, promises of grace dispel the mental gloom, and bear away the ponderous loads of grief, and the soft handkerchief of love wipes off the furrowing tear; while an inspired penman begins the glorious sentence with an unanswerable HOW: "If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up to the death for us all, *how* shall he not also with him give us all things?" Comfort, then, ye sons of sorrow; comfort, my soul; there is more in this verse than can be comprehended; and there is more love in the heart of God, than any language, or idiom of Speech, can convey to finite creatures.

If, for my sake, he has given his Son, what will he withhold in all the creation? Is the breath of his mouth better to him than his eternal, co-essential Son? Is the work of his hands dearer to him than his well-beloved bosom Son? And has he given him to the death for thee, and yet will deny thee the use of these? No. He that feeds the soul with heavenly manna, will support the body with daily bread. He that gives to drink out of the wells of salvation, will not fail to afford a cup of cold water. He that hath provided a robe of righteousness, that the shame of my nakedness do not appear, will also give wool in the season thereof.—He that harnesses mine inner man with all the armour of God, will put a covering on my head in the day of battle and war.* He that, in the counsel of peace, from eternity, secured my peace, will also shine upon my counsel, and make me decree a thing which shall come to pass. He that hath written my name among the living in Jerusalem, will also preserve, (this my faith pleads and expects,) my character, that I shall not

* At this time the Author had a view of entering into the navy, being time of war, as he did some time after.

shame what I profess in the world. He that hath destroyed spiritual death, will also for me unsting natural death, and spoil the grave of its victory.

Again, how can it be possible that God should give his Son, himself, his all, and yet deny me any thing? Will not he that is to crown me with glory above, strengthen me with grace below? Will he not bless me with peace of mind, who is to be my peace for ever? Triumph, O my faith! all things are Christ's, and Christ is God's: and God, Christ, and all things, are thine. Time is his, and in it I have my numbered years; the air is his, and in it I breathe; the world, and on it I dwell; its fulness, and I am fed; grace is his, and in it I stand; faith, and by it I overcome the world; tribulations are from him, and in them I glory; perfection is his, and towards it I press; death is his, and by it I arrive at home; heaven is his, and there is my mansion; eternity is his, and there is my treasure and glory.

MEDITATION IV.

SUBMISSION.

Will any, or will I, pretend to teach the Most High, knowledge, seeing he is excellent in working, and perfect in his ways? Then since I cannot direct him, why am not I submissive to his disposal? Can I predict events, or foresee futurities? No; how then should I promise myself serenity from a cloudless sky? or fear storms from an obscured heaven? when, as to the first, the gathering meteors may suspend an unexpected *umbra* before the sun, and draw a liquid curtain round the sky; or, as to the second, the gathered clouds may scatter, and let the welcome beams refresh the weary world. So, Lord, as from present appearances future contingencies cannot be discerned, it is my duty, and shall be my study, to be WHOLLY, FULLY, and FOR EVER, at thy disposal, to whom all thy works, all my purposes, and all my wanderings, are known from the beginning.

O! how the child of God should glory in his

choosing out for him the lot of his inheritance, and be content with that condition which Heaven accounts best for him, though not the grandest or greatest, not the richest or happiest; yea, not that state the most desired. I am not mine own, for I am bought with a price, and dearly paid for too, (so to speak.) Would it not seem too daring in me to instruct God how to garnish the heavens, how to set the sun, station the moon, place the poles, plant the fixed stars, and guide the wandering planets? Now, I am as much his by right, (yea, in the ties of love, more,) and as much at his disposal, as any of these his other creatures; and if I cannot complain of his conduct with these, why quarrel at his providences toward me? But another thing which ought to encourage to submission, is, that God's way is not only equitable in itself, but profitable for his people, for the latter end of the righteous is peace; and the end of the Lord is always gracious to his afflicted ones, who chooses in the furnace of affliction, brings light out of darkness, order out of confusion, real good out of seeming evil; and, finally, brings through fire and water to a wealthy place.

MEDITATION V.

COMFORTABLE CONCLUSIONS.

Dear Saviour, in thy sufferings I not only see the infiniteness of sin, but also the infiniteness of thy love; so that, though I have cause with myself to be angry on account of sin, I need not despair. If the desert of my folly be death, the merit of thy sufferings is life. If my sins mount up to heaven, thy mercy is above the heavens. Though they reach to the very throne to accuse me, there is One upon the throne that will not condemn me. They, in their seven-fold abominations, can rise no higher than the throne, but the rainbow of redeeming love and grace is both about and above the throne, and that in its seven-fold beauties, power, wisdom, justice, goodness, holiness, mercy, and truth. And as all the different rays meet in one glorious beam of

light, so all the attributes, all the perfections of God, are summed up in LOVE, who is graciously pleased to be called by it as his favorite name, "God is love!" By the mingling rays of this beauteous bow, all my blackness is removed, and I am clothed with beauty.

When I look to myself, and see my vileness and wants, I am confounded with shame; but when I look to thee, and see thy fulness and all-sufficiency, I am confounded with wonder!—Am I weak? He is my strength.—Am I foolish? He is made of God wisdom to me.—Am I wicked? He is made my righteousness.—Am I impure? He is made my sanctification.—Am I in bondage? He is made my complete redemption.—Am I in misery? From him tender mercy flows.—Do I falsify? Yet his promise is the very truth.—In a word, am I enmity itself? Then he is love itself that passes understanding. Mine is but the enmity of a creature, but his love is the love of God.

Sin may raise the tempest of wrath, but can do no more; but Christ not only calms the raging tempest, but gives peace of conscience, flowing from intimations of peace with God, and makes me heir of all things; so where sin hath abounded, grace much more abounds; where misery hath surrounded me, mercy hath crowned me. Sin is too strong for me, but thy grace is too strong for sin. Why, then, so vexed with fears, doubts, and unbelief? Because I am sinful! On that very account, Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin, that I, who knew no righteousness, might be made the righteousness of God in him.—But I am a great sinner. Then, he is a Saviour, and a great One. Where is boasting now, soul? See, that it is great mercy in God, great merit in Christ, that saves a great sinner. Since rich and free grace builds the temple of salvation, let it bear all the glory.—But I fall often into the same sin. That is my failing, over which I ought to mourn, and by which I should be driven out of all conceit with mine own holiness, high attainments, and religious duties, and cry, with tears of holy joy, Grace, grace to him that has laid the foundation,

carries on the fabric of redemption, and will, with shouting, bring forth the copestone.—Now, law, what hast thou to do with me? Turn thee over to my Surety, Jesus. O curse! thou hast lighted on his head, that the blessing might rest on mine! The brandished sword of justice is beat into the pruning-hook of the promise, that I may even plead justice for the blessing, as well as the performance of the promise.

Though once I durst not lift mine eyes heavenward, for fear of divine wrath, yet now I may come boldly to the throne of grace, and claim the blessings of his purchase.

In fine, it is the interest of the Son of God that I be saved. Though he had no concern for my immortal soul, yet he is jealous over his own glory, and will not cast his honour away, the honour of his equity, the honour of his love, the honour of his merits, and the honour of his word of promise, all which are concerned in my salvation. Nothing could hinder him to love me; what then shall make him hate me, seeing his love is stronger than death? He loved me when I was in a state of enmity; and now, when I am reconciled, will he be angry with me, now when I love him who first loved me? His love found me when I was wandering from him; and will he abandon me now when I am looking after him that seeth me? When I was altogether sin, he had mercy on me; and will he now take vengeance upon me, when I am mourning over sin, and grieved that I offend him? I had no claim, no qualification, that could cause his love to descend on me, and abide with me; but love, in sovereignty, visited me, and in sovereignty will dwell with me for ever; and though I sin his presence away, I shall never sin away his love, nor his presence altogether; for he shall appear the second time without sin imputed, and deliver me from sin inherent. Then, sin may be my burden, but shall not be my bane. Yet shall I never willingly let the traitor rest in my breast, that would persuade all my soul into rebellion against my dearest Lord, and best friend. I may have continual war with the invader, but shall obtain the vic-

tory at last; meanwhile, I will grieve more for offending him whose name is Love, by my sin, than for the desertions, doubts, clouds, afflictions, and chastisements that may thereby seize me.

Now, with the arms of my faith, I clasp about the promise, and about him in the promise; then, wherefore should unbelief, like the officious servant of the man of God, come near to thrust me away? Here will I live and here will I die, blessing God, who causeth me always to triumph in Jesus Christ my Lord.

MEDITATON VI.

RESIGNATION.

What I most desired thou hast denied, yet I praise thee: On what account, I know not, yet I praise thee: Thou hast done it; that silences me. Thy will makes it indisputable, and renders it my indispensable duty to fall in with it. Hitherto I have had no complaint on the conduct of providence; nor shall I complain till all the mazes are explained. Do, then, all thy counsel, though all my counsels should come to nought. Can he expect favors from God, that will not wait God's way and time?

But what matters it how the affairs of a present world go, if the interests of the next world are secured? The weather-cock is whirled about with every blast, but the iron spire is still at rest, and it is alike to it from what point the wind blows, because it cannot be displaced. So, what avails it though the outward man decay, if the inner man grow? though the temporal condition be perplexed, if the conscience be possessed of spiritual peace? I praise thee that thou interposest thy providence, even in disappointing my enterprises; and dost not give me up to the blind desires of mine own heart, and to wander at random in counsels of mine own. I can resolve the present case into nothing but thy will; yet I rejoice more to fall in with thy will, and to be submissive to thy disposal, than to have my will in

every point performed. This is the only way in my private capacity that I can glorify thee.

If all things went as I would, I could not positively learn the care of God; but when providence, beyond all human probability, twists enterprises out of my hands, and well-resolved designs out of my heart, this conduct clearly shows to me thy condescending concern about my lot and life. Thus thou takest the wise in their own craftiness; for when all my schemes were so well laid, that human policy approved of, and wit itself commended; yet, when thou didst blow upon them, how did they, like rainbows painted on the watery clouds, when thunders break, or boisterous winds attack, scatter into disappointments and pain! Hence in the school of providence I am taught some lessons: 1. Not to look to the appearance of things, but to the power of God, who brings light out of darkness, and calls the things that be not, as though they were. 2. That from probabilities impossibilities may spring, while apparent impossibilities dissolve into easy escapes. As for the first, it was very probable that the Egyptians might overtake and put Israel to the sword, yet it became impossible for them to do it. And as for the second, it seemed impossible that Israel could escape ruin, when inclosed with insurmountable hills, and swelling seas, and pursued by enraged foes; yet, in what an easy way did they walk to their deliverance! 3. I am taught to believe, and to give glory to the almighty power of God, when impossibilities throng thick before me. 4. To see mine own finite wisdom to be but folly, that I can neither prevent nor foresee those events which I would not incline should come. 5. To hold all my mercies, all my privileges from God, and not from the certainty in which they seem to stand. 6. Not to think that things are lost, when so they seem, as I am taught by experience, that when I think I am most sure of some things, they are all on a sudden rapt from me; so when lost, they can all of a sudden be restored. And, lastly, to see the mutable and fickle state of temporal things, and therefore to hold a loose gripe of the creature, however dear, however near, and to set my affections on things that are above.

MEDITATION VII.

FEEBLE NATURE.

Oh! how do I groan in this body of clay, this clog of humanity! When I would serve God with gladness, feeble nature hinders me; my strength is exhausted, and I must be again refreshed with sleep. Though grace had not sin to fight against, it has infirmity to struggle with; and I have no way of getting comfort under my calamities of this kind, which are so many, but by beholding with the eye of faith, through the prospect of revelation, the glories of the world above, when this mortal shall put on immortality, and death shall be swallowed up of life. There my weary eyes shall never seek to be refreshed with sleep, amidst the engaging glories of the higher house! The mirth of this world, like an enchantress, lulls men asleep to everlasting destruction; but the songs of the inner temple rouse to all eternity. With the strength of an angel shall I step along the hills of glory, and walk over the paradise of God. With greater ease shall I *go on* with the highest acts of adoration, than here *give over* the ordinary acts of devotion; for it shall be life to my soul, and vigour to all my powers, to be so employed! There he that pours the new wine into the saints, capacitates, strengthens, and supports the soul, to receive the eternal weight of glory. Meditation shall never tire my thoughts in tracing all the mazes of redeeming love! Everlasting hallelujahs shall dwell on my tongue; and how shall I improve in the song above, while I rest not day or night to sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive glory, and honour, blessing and power, dominion and praise, for ever and ever." There the uninterrupted vision of him, to whom when I see him I shall be assimilated, shall strengthen mine eyes, that they shall be able to receive the images of all the celestial glories. No weariness there, where the exercise renders happy. No weakness, where Jehovah is my strength. No want of subject, where

the Lord God and the Lamb are my song! Oh shall I be able to sing *over* God through eternity? To sing his being and attributes, his love and his mercy, his righteousness and truth, even a *whole God*, and a full glory; a consummate happiness, and a continual enjoyment?

Well then, what though the hours of time steal from me unknown? I rejoice that I shall not lose one moment through wearines, while eternity rolls. Oh! may I improve this to prepare for that; for if eternity is not secured ere time be spent, I am undone in both.

Roll on, thou day of love, to perfect strength in my weakness, and crown a poor expectant with eternal glory.

MEDITATION VIII.

WORLDLY LOSSES AND MISFORTUNES UNIVERSAL.

Convene, ye mournful throng, and vent your dreary moans; muster all your complaints, and recite the causes of your sorrow. Then hear royalty itself break silence first, in the melancholy list, and tell in tears, (but dares distress attack the throne, and sorrow gloom within the palace-walls?) how courtiers prove perfidious, and rebellious subjects would drive him from his throne! how his faithful armies fly, or fall before the foe! while his fleets increase at once his sorrow and the enemies' spoils. Sorrow has a lodging taken in every brow, from the king to the beggar; and at one time or other, we may expect to see the lodging possessed by all the gloomy train. Hence see one sad, under the loss of his honor and reputation; another meeting with disappointment instead of preferment; another seldom out of mourning, so fast his relations die around him. Some have neither son nor grand-son in the street, daughter nor grand-daughter in the house. There the affectionate wife has lost the husband of her youth; and here the disconsolate mourner has interred his lovely spouse. Here so many needy

pensioners are real mourners at the burial of their benefactors, who can be no more concerned for them; there a tender family are weeping at the grave of both parents. Here the packet from the distant Indies, brings the melancholy account of father, son, or brother's death, who was long expected home, but now shall return no more; there the list of the slain on the day of battle, fills many a sad heart with sorrow. Here a sudden misfortune snatches one away in the bloom of life; there another is slain by the bloody ruffian. Here the tender suckling dies unseen in the silent night; and there the pretty boy perishes in the water. Here the devouring flame robs a man of his all, while some of the inhabitants are consumed in the burning; there the fierce tempest sends the merchants' treasure into the depths of the sea, and the crew go down together. Here the barren wife longs to embrace a son; and there another bitterly bewails that ever her's was born. Here one loses his good name innocently, and has no method to clear it till the day of judgment; and there peace is taken away from them that should live in daily harmony. Here some are oppressed with pinching want; there others with pining sickness Some are banished their native country; others condemned to perpetual imprisonment. Some are deformed from their mother's womb; others lose their limbs by accidents. There sits the blind begging, while the lame is carried from door to door. Of some God has tied the tongue, that it cannot speak; of others stopt the ear, that it cannot hear. There some deprived of reason, neither rest themselves, nor suffer those around them to rest, while their case is melancholy above description. In a word, what losses and crosses, sorrows and distresses, uncertainties and anxieties, do mankind labour under! The wisdom that is from above, will lead me to expect nothing but vanity and vexation below. But, O! how happy is the soul that has all his treasure in heaven, all his happiness in God! May this be my case, and then I shall triumph in the midst of losses, distresses, disappointments, and pain.

MEDITATION IX.

PROVIDENCE.

How manifold are the mercies of God, and how surprising the scene of adorable Providence ! Here wheels revolve within a wheel, and all the glorious spokes are full of flaming eyes, signifying omniscience and wisdom. Seeming contradictions just conduce to bring about the longed-for blessing. Were all things silent, providence aloud proclaims a God; and to the observing eye, the government of the world in general, and of men and their affairs of life in particular is not less beautiful, is not less surprising, than the creation.— What mighty mountains are removed, what stupendous difficulties are dissolved, that a plain and easy passage may be prepared for the approaching good ! O how is my soul delighted with the back-look into my life, and ravished with the sweet survey of the conduct of Providence ! All mercies are benign and comforting ; but O how do some exceedingly surprise ! when I behold the instrument or hand by which, the way and manner how, and the time when they came. Have I not seen it from a hand I expected nothing from, in a way and manner I never could have contrived, and at a time when least apparent? Has not holy Providence written a blank on my wisdom and prudence, in baffling my enterprises, rendering my endeavours abortive, and bringing my counsel to nought, that he alone might be exalted ? And then, in a way out of my view, foreign to my expectation, and without my endeavours, granted the very same request I had sought ? Sometimes seeming contradictions vex the poor expectant, though only sent to exercise his faith in God, and patience for the performance of the promise. I have also seen disappointments multiplied. Disappointments not only bring about, but beautify the blessing. Sometime providence has hindered me to embrace an offered favor, when I knew not *how* or *why*, that to my greater advantage it might be afterwards bestowed.

Thy path, O thou Governor of men and angels ! is in the mighty waters, and thy footsteps are not known; for who can know the ways of him who is wonderful in working ? Therefore I approve his conduct, admire his goodness, and where I cannot see his end, am silent and adore.

MEDITATION X.

TRUE GREATNESS.

Many are reckoned great by the world, and are often envied by their inferiors, who are yet ignorant of what renders a man truly great. A courtier, as Ahithophel, a prince, as Haman, and a king, as Belshazzar, may be mean and sordid persons; for often in the highest stations the basest of men are set up. Coaches and chariots; horses and hounds; many servants, and a numerous retinue; a sumptuous table, and fine apparel; high titles, and honorary posts; great friends, and noble blood; rich connexions, and immense wealth, do not constitute true greatness. It is not getting a staff in the field, or a flag in the fleet, being made secretary of state, or sent ambassador to foreign courts, that will render one great. It is not strength of body, natural courage, liberal education, bright parts, or sparkling genius, that can make a truly great man. Hence this seeming contradiction, yet sterling truth, *Great men are not always great.* Are there, then, great men any where to be found? Yes, though they attract not much notice or regard of men. The holy, humble, self-denied soul is such;—he that lives above the things of time, and has his meditation on God, and the things of the invisible world; that is pleased with a little of the good things of time,—can forgive enemies,—pass by affronts,—forget injuries,—repay hatred with love,—rejoice in tribulation,—triumph in faith,—have rule over his own spirit,—mourn for the sins of the times,—weep over his want of conformity to God's law,—tremble at his threatenings,—depend on the promises,—bewail his omissions,—repent daily of his sin,—wrestle in prayer, and prevail with God, and, Enoch-like, have his conversation in heaven, and walk with God:—This is he that is truly great in the eye of angels, in the eye of God.

MEDITATION XI.

DISAPPOINTMENTS.

July, 1757.

How uncertain are our best-founded expectations from created things! Nothing seemingly more sure; the

time when, the place where, and the manner how, designs were to be put in execution, being set by the agreement and concurrence of every one concerned! And yet, in the event, nothing more unsure! O irresistible Providence! How dost thou laugh at the folly of man, whose purblind eye sees nothing to change the face of things, till by an unexpected revolution, and severe discipline, he is made to know his fallibility and blindness! O foolish heart of man, to be fond of this or that to excess! Thou seest the beginning of a matter, but not the end; thou beholdest the outer wheel of providence, but considerest not that there is an inner wheel, even a wheel in the middle of a wheel, which produces scenes unobserved before, scenes which finite wisdom never could invent.

Perhaps the present disappointment, though great and unexpected, is a kind one,* could I with patience wait and see the issue; and, beyond dispute, it is a just one; "for shall not the righteous Judge of all the earth do right?"

But is my disappointment in the most momentous things, or only in matters of inferior concern? Have I got a message from the court of Heaven, that there is no salvation for me there? no mercy at the throne? no peace to be expected from him that sits thereon? No, no. Then what ails me? Is not eternal felicity secured, a noble panacea, and sufficient antidote against the heaviest misfortunes of a deceitful world? What avail a faithless flatterer, a falsifying friend, a violated promise, a mob of backbiters, disappointment of a place, a worldly loss, a broken purpose, a thwarted enterprise, expectation vain, and hope, though a long expectant, in the issue bringing forth nothing but wind? What avail all these, in comparison of the everlasting interests of my immortal soul? But, if these afflictions make me miserable, shall I make myself more miserable still, by handling the coals that burn me, and reading over the register of my misfortunes, which will be forgot in eternity, as the waters that flow away. How, then, shall I antedate eternity, and anticipate the felicity of the world to come, but by forgetting my miseries in the triumph of faith?

* Such it was, indeed, is the author's reflection, 1778, on the particular disappointment to which he alludes.

Moreover, these many turnings, and stupendous meanders of my life, are all squared by the straight line of the decree of God, with whom nothing is crooked. The seeming gaps of my lot are but the fulfilment of Heaven's design concerning me, and my repeated disappointments are only the accomplishment of the counsel of God.

Besides, who can tell what Heaven has in reserve for me? It is good to wait on God, and expect good at his hand. "Ah!" says unbelief, "nothing at present appears." Hush! thou atheistical monster, wilt thou limit Omnipotence, or allege, that infinite wisdom is nonplussed, and Almighty power not able to perform? I shall yet see his kindness large as my faith, and his mercy measure with my widest expectations. May I never get the desire of my heart but with God's blessing, nor the request of my lips but with his good will.

This is, indeed, consolation to me, that no sinister views stare ghastly in my face, when so many struggling thoughts pass through my suffering heart. If my sin be a sin of ignorance, pardon me, and show me wherefore thou contendest with me.—But, perhaps my heart was too much set on my favorite desire, which, though lawful in itself, might by that become unlawful. So Æsop hugged his child to death, out of too much fondness. Then let me keep within the due bounds of esteem henceforth to every thing below, and take a loose hold of all earthly things, that when they are twisted out of my hand, they may not torment my heart.

But why disquieted, my soul? Why uneasy still? Recal thy past life, and lay it down before thee, and mark, if thou canst, when thou hadst any reason to complain of Heaven's procedure towards thee. Have not things, which, at their first appearance, seemed adverse like this, turned out at last for good? Say, when thou reviewest the whole, say, if thou darest, if ever God dealt ill with thee! No; every providence will prove the contrary; every mercy will aver it; yea, every *change* of life, every *crook* of lot will seal it.

But, seeing this is thy work, O God! the effect of thine ever-equal will, I ought not only to be dumb, but rejoice in it, and be glad in what thou hast wrought, however it appear to me, and wonder that thou shouldst

concern thyself with me, so as to disappoint my ignorant designs, (such may my schemes, plans, and enterprises be.) Hence I bless thee for all that befals me, if I have not a sinful hand in it; and, if I have, I plead for pardon through Christ's meritorious name.

Now, I rest, and am composed, and calmly wait on thee, resigned to Heaven's determination, in every thing concerning me in time, till I arrive at that better country, at that perfect state, where there is neither disappointment nor pain.

MEDITATION XII.

EXPERIENCE.

How good is it to wait on God, and bode kindness at his hand! When hope is gone, and all endeavours rendered useless, his watchful providence grants me my request, opens a door for me, and does all that I desire. O how I admire the kindness of his love, and the wise disposal of his providence! When disappointments thronged thick on me, I knew not what to think, or what to do; but through thy grace, *I waited for thy counsel*, and have not waited in vain. Thy time, thy way, thy method, are the best, who clearly seest through dark scenes, and knowest my frame, and better what suits it, than the deepest penetration of my heart ever can.

Now, when I have for many years as it were, tried the dispensation of providence, what have I to say against it? Nothing. For, what at first appeared dark and intricate, in a little was clear and intelligible; yea, sometimes that scene which seemed most gloomy on the outer wheel, when the inner wheel revolved, shone most glorious, even to astonishment; so that, what has in the beginning extorted desponding thoughts from me, has in the end excited me to songs of praise.

In the part of my life that is already past, and in the scenes of providence that are already cleared up, I cheerfully confess, and sing, *He hath done all things well.* This is confirmed to me by the experience of many years; so that I may blush, when I see some of the mysteries of providence in part unriddled, that I have had

such low apprehensions of the love and goodness of God, measuring his wisdom by my shallow comprehension, his power by my cramped span, his love by my unbelief; his goodness by my evil eye, and his ways with me by my ways with him; yea, I have been base enough, in every new scene of providence, to fall anew into the same sin, and subject myself anew unto the same shame and blushing.

"Experience is the schoolmaster of fools," says the proverb; but what a fool must I be, who will not be instructed by all I have seen! Or why should I have one hard thought of the circumstances with which I am at present entangled? Though in many things I have yet the dark, and not the bright side of the cloud towards me, yet I should not have the least hard conclusion on the conduct of unerring Providence, but wait till it be accomplished, and cleared up to me. But how shall I blush, (were it possible,) and be confounded at my mean thoughts of God and his providence, when the wandering labyrinth that composed my life shall be unriddled in the noon-day of glory, to my unspeakable joy, and everlasting admiration. As I cannot recall these doubts that now distract my breast, to convert them into acts of faith; nor these murmurings to hush them into silent resignation; I should study now to glorify God in the deepest valley of misery, and darkest night of adversity, by thinking highly and honourably of him who governs both heaven and earth. Finally, how sweet must that day be to my soul, when my experience shall confirm and confess the kind end of every providence; and providence shall sweetly explain and accomplish the promise; and all shall join in one voice for ever. *Not one good thing hath failed of all that the Lord hath spoken.*

MEDITATION XIII.

CONTENTMENT.

WHAT wouldst thou have, O my soul! to make thee content? Thou hast much in hand, and more in hope: Thou hast the comforts of life, and the means of salvation; the word preached, and the sacraments dispen-

sed; an open vision, and an English Bible. Thou hast the possession of the life that now is, and the promise of that which is to come. If thou art not so happy as some, thou art not so miserable as others. If there are many in an higher and better state in the world than thou, (and shouldst thou quarrel?) there are more in a lower and worse condition, (and shouldst not thou wonder?)

If thou get bread to eat, and raiment to put on, any thing with a blessing, it is much, seeing thou deservest to be fed with the curse. It is mercy that thou art an inhabitant of God's earth, who mightest have been a prisoner in the pit of devouring fire. Thou hast cause of cordial exultation, that God is not as yet inexorable; and it may content thee in any condition, that God doth not contend with thee for ever. Art thou not ashamed to wish for much, when thou hast forfeited all? Wouldst thou have the better part here, and the blessed portion hereafter? the nether-springs of earthly comforts, and the upper-springs of heavenly consolation? Must thou be served of Mammon, that thou mayest serve God? And must thou be hired with earthly felicity, to accept of heavenly glory? No, Lord, thou thyself, thy love alone, shall content me for ever; for any thing is too much for me, who deserve nothing; a crumb of mercy is a rich banquet to me, who am a bankrupt at law. What matters it how I fare at the kings gate, since I am the man whom the king delighteth to honor; and shall in a little, with mirth on every side, be brought into the king's palace, there to abide for ever? Surely, then, his time can never be bitter who has the hopes of an happy eternity; nor can crosses greatly vex that soul that is crucified to the world, and the world to him: nor has he any loss to fear who has his treasures in eternity; neither can misfortunes impoverish him who is an heir of the true riches; nor the death of friends distress him whose best friend lives for ever.

I see, then, I only want one thing to make me happy; and that is, to know the precious things of my treasure, and that I am so happy. Speak, and I am blessed for ever; speak the heavenly word. "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

MEDITATION XIV.

DEATH.

1757.

THERE is a lesson that concerns the whole world, which yet few of the world lay to heart; and that is, that all men are mortal. If I ask at the practice of the universality of mankind, it denies it. If I return and ask at my own breast; why, I confess I must meet with death, but conclude myself immortal for the present, and so hold easy for the time being, though multitudes drop down around me. Ah! when do I think on death, or suppose its approach near? Many foolish pleasing scenes of life do I act in my fancy, but how seldom the final scene of dissolution! When do I represent myself to myself, laid on a sick-bed, on a death-bed, with broken groans, cold sweats, trembling joints, languid looks, an intermitting pulse, and all the signs of death, while friends bewail about me? Or, when do I run through the more interesting part of the scene, how, when I leave the world, matters may stand between my soul and God? How I shall appear before the majesty of Heaven, and stand in the tremendous judgment? Strange! Is this the practice of one who knows, and would fain believe, he must die? Pious kings have had their sepulchres hewn out long before their death, that every time they saw them, they might, in the midst of all their pomp and glory, see where they must shortly lie. In this even heathens shame me, of whom some have, by their own orders, had monitions of their own mortality made to them daily; while others have set the skulls of the deceased at their tables, to moderate their mirth, and remind them of mortality.

When I look abroad in the world, scenes of sorrow are every where to be seen. Sometimes both parents taken away from a young family of helpless orphans. At other times, the rising pillars, the apparent support of their aged and infirm parents, are snatched away from the grey-headed mourners! Who shall quarrel with Omnipotence, whether he cut down the *olive plants from about the table*, or break the tree from amidst the dependent *sprigs?* Indeed, it is hard to persuade fond affection into silence, or to attain to resignation under

the loss of a beloved friend. For when my renewed part is prostrate at the throne of the all-wise Disposer, then my corruption is apt to rise into rebellion against the doings of the Most High. But whether have I most interest in my nearest relations, or in God? Is one creature more connected with another creature, by any tie, than the Creator of both? What do I pray for, but that the will of God be done? And yet, if it come near my family, I take again my word, and would have my will preferred to God's! All I am, and have, are God's to dispose of, how and when he pleases; who will never infringe his justice, or forget his bowels of compassion, even in my afflictions!

Would not I glorify God in my life and in my death? and why not also in the death of my friends? He glorified himself in their life, therefore they existed; he glorifies himself in their death, therefore they are not. Will I pull and draw with God? or tell him, he cannot have my friends yet, for, though they have served their generation, yet they have not served my fond affection? An excess of grief here bewrays my want of love to God, to my relations, and to myself. For if I love God, I will be glad that his will be done with me and mine, even to death. If I love my friends, I will be happy in their happiness; and if I love my own soul, I will bless God for taking away friends, when like to come too much between my love and my Beloved, and like to take up too much of my affection from "the chiefest among ten thousand."

Death and life, earth and heaven, time and eternity, the footstool and the throne, are thine. Can I then bewail my friends, of whose felicity I have the cheerful hopes, that they are brought from death to life, translated from earth to heaven, from time to eternity, and from the footstool to the throne? They are above the reach of sorrow; and, on that account, shall I be below the reach of comfort? Though carnal ties are dissolved in death, yet the spiritual relation ceases not. So it matters not where the family dwell; for even in heaven they are exalted members of our exalted Head, and I a militant member of the same exalted Head; thus, though far scattered, some in this world, some in the other world, yet all shall be convened together in

"the general assembly and church of the first born," free from sin, free from sorrow. Almost my anguish would convert to joy, did not streams of briny grief pollute the chrystal current, and recall my ponderous loss. But what call I loss? *Absence*, not *loss*. They are found of God,—dwell in and with God, and in what respects are they lost? Just I see them not, I hear them not. What is that to them who are so happy? and what should it be to me who know them to be so happy? I would adventure a friend far from home, to a foreign country, there to make a fortune, if informed by every post of his prosperity. But here I am sure, not only of their felicity, but of its perpetuity. Whatever my loss be, let me look to God for a supply of all. And since I have not them fondly to talk with, let my soliloquy be to God; and as my love cannot penetrate into the pulverizing sepulchre, to hug their putrefying clay, nor enter eternity to find out their disembodied soul, let it return and empty itself alone on God.

Now I see the vanity of the world; death, when sent, pities not the life of the poor, spares not the rich, but is faithful to his charge, and cannot be corrupted. They are happy in leaving me, and going to God; I am happy in losing them, and returning to God. God has broken, as Hezekiah did the brazen serpent, the idol to whom I gave incense, only due to God, and called it *a piece of clay*. But now may the sweet hopes of a blessed immortality banish the sorrows of present dissolution, and mitigate my grief; the more so as I need not sorrow like them that have no hope. A little, and I am no more; soon my dust shall mingle with theirs, and wait that joyful trumpet, that shall summon every happy slumberer to immortality and bliss.

MEDITATION XV.

COMMUNION WITH GOD, WHAT IT IS.

COMMUNION with God is an expression often in my mouth, but which sinks no further; I know the word, but neither its blessed import, nor glorious extent. My prayers and practice jar; for while I beg it with my lips, I study not to attain it in my life. Ah! what a

stranger am I to that which I would fain have flattered myself that I am acquainted with! Alas! what know I of walking with God,—of that joy which is found in believing? What know I of the lasting and abiding impressions of his inexpressible love! What of that transforming vision, and assimilating sight which is enjoyed below, whereby the soul is changed into the same image, from glory to glory! What do I know of dwelling in his presence all the day long! What of pouring out my soul in prayer to him! and wrestling with him for the blessing! How seldom is my meditation of him sweet!

But union is the basis of communion; for how can those walk or talk together that are not agreed? O then to be joined to the Lord, and become one spirit! But, my soul, mistake not communion, for it lies not in a flaming profession, nor in the performance of Christian duties, as reading, hearing, praying, praising, though enjoyed in these; nor in the greatest parts, and brightest talents; nor in lofty expressions in prayer; nor in the knowledge of divine things: What is it then? It is just *a dwelling in and with God, and God dwelling in and with the soul.* It is God's love going out on the soul, and the soul in love going out on God. God dwells in the duty with supplies of grace, in the meditation as its subject, and in the heart as a portion and chief good. And the soul dwells in God as her ultimate end, dilates in his fulness, riots in his bliss. The soul that is blessed with such a communion, favoured with such a fellowship, knows no other object for her love; no other subject for her thoughts; no other employment for her faculties; no higher degree of happiness for her attainment, than consummate communion; no other beloved for her affection; and no other end for her existence. Nor is this all. In communion with God, the soul shares of his fulness, communicates of his glory, drinks at his pleasures, satiates herself with his love, participates of his communicable perfections, enters into his joy, and partakes of the divine nature. O life of angels! O paradise of love! O transporting employ! O ecstacy of bliss! The soul is always with God; now in prayer, then in praise; now in meditation, then in ejaculation; she has not a complaint but she tells to God; not a grief but she

makes known to him; not a sin but she mourns over to him; not a request, not a desire, but she reveals to him. O that holy intimacy that is contracted between the soul and God! that freedom of converse, that wrestling with God in prayer, disputing about the blessing! *Let me go;—I will not let thee go until thou bless me!* This is the life of heaven on earth, God come down to man, or man taken up to God.

Now, my soul, what sayest, what thinkest thou of all this? Ah! the carnal mind is enmity against God, and against communion with God. Then I must either be crucified to the world, or cursed with the world. It is not a Sabbath-day's devotion, a rapture in time of praise or prayer, and returning greedily to the world. Communion is another thing than I have hitherto taken it to be. It is constant and continual. I should endeavour to keep my soul always in an heavenly frame, even in earthly affairs; thus the angels, even in messages to our world, carry heaven with them. Although I must mind the necessary affairs of this life, yet I should carry God to the field with me, and to the closet, to the street, and to my table. I should work and walk, fall asleep, and awake in his presence; and talk with him on my bed, when all around me keep silence; and when hurried away with vain rovings, my soul should still return to God, as her centre, as her resting-place.

O the pleasure that is in this life of communion with God! it is a young heaven, with which, in the highest degree of perfection, all the saints in glory are blessed. Then, Lord, begin this life of communion in my soul, to which I am too much a stranger; destroy every thing that would destroy it; and as I would desire to live with thee hereafter, so let me endeavour to live with thee here, and thus improve for eternity, and prepare for the world to come.

MEDITATION XVI.

THE DISPOSAL OF PROVIDENCE ALWAYS BEST.

Why would I still take the government of myself out of thy hand, and choose according to my fond desires? Can my ignorance penetrate through the thick darkness of futurity? Who would choose a blind mad-

man to guide him through some lonely ways, and intricate meanders, with which neither the traveller nor the guide, are acquainted in the least; since he might lead him where he lists, and stab him as he strays? It is surely safer to walk by faith in God, than to be led by fancy. I choose what is most agreeable to me; but God chooses what is most advantageous for me; and proves, in his disposal of me, that his love to me is greater than my love to myself. I love blindly, but he loves with the wisdom of a God. I would have my prayers answered at my time, but God answers them at his time, which is always the best time. I would have my blessings in sum, but he gives them in parcels, because I could not bear them all at once. So the prudent mother feeds her child, not according to the irregular appetite of her infant, to avoid surfeits, but according to its real necessity, to afford nourishment. In this unhappy life, it is not the least of my happiness, that I am not at my own direction, at mine own disposal; or a ship without pilot, and at the mercy of wind and waves, might as well find the desired port, as I attain to rest and tranquility.

Through faith and patience it is that I must inherit the promises; therefore God, to make me inherit them in the way that all the saints have done before, tries my patience, and exercises my faith; and dare I quarrel at his conduct, or be displeased at such bright displays of his peculiar care and loving-kindness? Why, then, so many risings in my breast, so many doubtings in my soul? Hence I will conclude of every contingency in my lot, however contrary to my enterprises and designs, however crushing to flesh and blood, that it is the very best for me, both with respect to this world and that which is to come.

MEDITATION XVII.

LOVE IN ITS FOURFOLD EXTENSION. Eph. iii. 13.

Some things may have heighth as the heavens, depth as the sea, and breadth and length as the earth; but love divine has an height which cannot be seen, a depth which cannot be sounded, a length which cannot be

limited, and a breadth which cannot be measured! O Lord! may I know thy love in its depth, in bringing me out of the lowest hell; in its height, in setting me on the Redeemer's throne; in its breadth, in making me an heir of God; and in its length, in eternizing my bliss in the regions of glory. This love, in its depth, recovers and restores fallen man to endless felicity; in its height, crowns and confirms the church of the first-born; the inhabitants of the better country walk at liberty in its breadth, and rejoice in its length, its eternal duration.

Thou, Lord, hast, in thy love, been my dwelling-place before the mountains were brought forth; and art my dwelling-rock while I wander in the howling desert, and wilt be my temple when sun and moon are no more. Well does thy love deserve a fourfold definition, that answers my fourfold situation. Thou has loved me with an everlasting love, when in the loins of my parents, therefore with loving-kindness dost thou draw me. Thou lovest me now, when I appear in this world, a man composed of soul and body; therefore dost thou reveal thyself to me. Thou wilt love me when I exist in a separate state, when my body is laid in the silent grave, and my soul carried into the world of spirits; therefore, at my dissolution, shall I enter into the joy of my Lord. And thou wilt love me when my soul and body are united again; therefore thou wilt pass the gracious sentence on me, in the sight of men and angels; and, in the sight of the whole world, present me with a crown of life, a crown of glory, which fadeth not away. When I lay weltering in my blood, it pitied me; when running on in the mad career of sin, it converted me; and now that I am reconciled, it will never leave me, but at last will crown my graces with perfection.

This glorious love extends to every point, to every quarter. In the rugged path of life, it supports me; amidst the sorrows of life, it comforts me; in the hour of death, it is my sun and shield; and at the day of judgment, shall spread an heaven before me. This love in its depth, answers my necessities; in its height, crowns my highest expectations; in its breadth, replenishes my soul with goodness; and in its length, satiates my most enlarged desires of mind, and suits the eter-

nity of my existence. In the depth of this love, the Son of God became man; and in its height men are made the sons of God. It locks the gates of hell, so that I shall never fall into perdition; it opens the gates of heaven, so that I shall enter in, to swim in an ocean of love, whose height and depth, breadth and length, shall be the subject and the song of the church triumphant round the throne, through everlasting day.

MEDITATION XVIII.

SLANDER.

March 17, 1767.

WHAT a wicked world do we live in! If happy we are envied; if miserable, we are contemned; and in every condition slandered. With the psalmist of old, I may say, "The mouth of the slanderer is opened against me." With him I may add, "They have spoken against me without a cause." O that, with him, I could also say, "But I gave myself to prayer?"

I am not the first that have suffered innocently. The man after God's own heart, in the darkest day of his distress, (for slander has no pity,) and in the midst of his life guards, is attacked by a subject, and has the most virulent speeches thrown out against him, accompanied with dust; and the most bitter reproaches, sent home with vollies of stones? David, thou wast never more like a king, nor more like the King of heaven, than now, who makes his sun to shine on the good and the evil, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust. I read, I admire, and would imitate: "Let him alone, let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him." Such patience under such ill usage, at any other time, would not have been prudent; but now it is like a king, like a saint, like an angel, like God.

From David I cast mine eye to David's Lord, the God of angels, who, by his own creatures, and to his very face, is called a devil. He whose miracles set his divinity above doubt, is accused as a deceiver, condemned as an imposter, and executed as a malefactor; yet hear his prayer; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The patience of the type, and the prayer of the antitype, let me study to imitate.

How cautious should we be in believing detracting stories, since nothing can be liker truth, yet, nothing more untrue, than the slander I complain of. But O how sweet is the testimony of a good conscience? It is an impenetrable shield against all the poisoned arrows of reproach. When the soul can call in the heart-searching God to witness its innocency, well may it triumph, knowing that "the curse causeless shall not come." But how difficult is it to be of a meek and forgiving spirit, when despitefully used! To love an enemy, and forgive an evil-speaker, is an higher attainment than is commonly believed. Christianity in theory and Christianity in practice, are very different things. It is easy to talk of Christian forbearance among neighbours, but to practise it ourselves, proves us to be Christians indeed. The surmises of a few credulous persons need not trouble that man, who knows his cause is soon to be tried in court, and he openly acquitted. So the evil language of evil times need not greatly disturb me, since in the day of judgment "my judgment shall be brought forth as the noon-day." While I pray for pardon to my slanderers, I also plead, that their evil speeches may not be established in the earth.

The circumstances of David change, but not his heavenly temper. Hence the abandoned Benjamite neither finds him the desperado when driven from Jerusalem, nor the tyrant when returning in triumph. 'I have sinned,' says the prostrate rebel; 'I pardon,' says the prosperous king. 'What! my Lord,' cries Abishai, 'shall not Shimei be slain, that cursed the Lord's anointed?' 'No; shall my restoration be laid in blood? May not I pardon, for am not I king this day in Israel?' Thus David will not avenge his personal injury; but as Shimei's malediction was a breach of the law of heaven, commits the matter to Solomon, and his wickedness at last found him out.

My passion runs in a wrong channel; for my grief should be greater than the malicious slanderer sins against God, against his own soul, and against the truth in his elaborate lies, than for all the mischief his bitter reproaches can do to me.

Every time the military man enters the field of battle, he must either stand his ground, or come off with dis-

grace; so under every trial, my graces either must reap advantage, or suffer loss. Therefore, my present duty is not to slander my slanderers, not to meditate revenge, or rejoice when evil finds them: But, first, to justify God in all things; then, to forgive, pray for, and love mine enemies; thirdly, to study what I may be reproved in, chastised for, or instructed about; and, lastly, that every grace, (faith in God, patience under the rod, humility of mind, and meekness towards all,) may improve under the present providences.

MEDITATION XIX.

FEAR, AND OTHER PASSIONS.

Four things I should fear; God, myself, temptation, and sin. I should fear God, for his greatness; self, for its infirmity; temptation, for its danger; and sin, for its defilement. I should fear God with love; myself with caution; sin with hatred; and temptation with resolution. The fear of God will take away the fear of man; the fear of self will moderate the love of self; the fear of sin will make watchful against sin; and the fear of temptation will be an antidote against temptation. My fear of God should be constant with cheerfulness; of self, constant with trembling; of sin, constant with watchfulness; and of temptation, constant with vigilance. The first is my attainment; the second is my duty; the third is my wisdom; and the fourth is my prudence. The fear of sin shall fly away, when I am made perfect in holiness, and pass into glory; the fear of self shall cease, when self is put off, and God is all in all; the fear of temptation, when Satan is trodden under my feet: but the fear of God shall endure for ever; only the panic is removed, when love is made perfect, and casteth out fear; for the fear of saints, struggling with a body of sin and death, hath torment in it; but there is no torment in the fear of seraphic hosts, who, with the profoundest awe and reverence before the throne, cover their faces with their wings. I see, then, that love, accompanied with fear that has cast out the torment of terror, shall dwell in every glorified breast.

Several things should be the objects of my most ar-

dent desire; as, the lessening of Satan's kingdom; the downfall of the Roman Antichrist, and Mahometan delusion; the conversion of the Jews; the spreading of the gospel and knowledge of God through the world; the growth of practical religion in every breast; and the hastening of the glory of the latter days.

Several things I should admire and wonder at; as the being and perfections of God; the unity in Trinity, and Trinity in unity; the love of God; the incarnation of the Son; the passion of Christ; the purchase of his sufferings; the names of Immanuel; the offices of the Redeemer; the relations of the God-man; the Holy Ghost's indwelling in the soul; the union of saints to their Head; the communion of creatures with God; the justification of the guilty; the sanctification of the unclean; the glorification of man that is but a worm; the great and precious promises; the excellency of grace; the efficacy of faith; the nature and immortality of the soul; and the glories of the world to come.

Several things I should mourn over; as, the hardness of my heart; my ignorance of God; my luke-warmness in the matters of his glory; the prevalency of sin; my want of love; my promptitude to revenge; my complacency in created enjoyments; a carnal mind and tongue; and carelessness about the concerns of the unseen world:—and abroad the world, I should mourn over the degeneracy of the times; the corruption of morals; the abounding of iniquity; the trampling on truth; and the adorning of the temple of error; which, if attacked, an outcry is made, *Great is the light of nature, the power of free will, and the excellency of morality, the goddess of the universe.*

Several things I should prefer to others; as, the glory of God to all; his honour to my credit; and his love more than my own life:—and I should grieve more at the sins of others, than for mine own sorrows, and count my sins a heavier burden than my afflictions. I should esteem the promise of eternal life more than the possession of all created things, and inward joy more than outward peace.

And, finally, in the midst of all, several things should cause me to rejoice; as that God governs all things; that all things shall work for his glory, and the good

of his people; that righteousness shall dwell in the earth, and sin as ashamed stop its mouth; that grace shall be perfected; conquest crown the wrestler; and love be blown into a flame, when eternal life is the portion of the soul, and God is all in all in heaven, where vision shall be without the glass, fruition above measure, communion inconceivably and divinely near, knowledge full, and the saints, (in the highest perfection that creatures can attain unto,) made partakers of the divine nature! Now, what joy may it afford, that the glory of this day, the dawning of eternal glory, is not very far away?

MEDITATION XX.

UNIVERSAL IMPROVEMENT.

As there is not a moment of time but I must account for, so there is nothing that happens me but I should improve. Miseries I should improve, to remind me or my pedigree, that my first father hath sinned; mercies, in admiring the fountain whence, and the freeness with which they flow; prosperity, in cheerful devotion; adversity, in consideration; riches, in charity; poverty, in contentment; opportunity of revenge, in a frank forgiveness, and doing good for ill; evil company, in raising my estimate of the saints of God; loss of relations, in loosening my affections from the creature, raising them to the immortal world, and remembering my latter end; sickness, in preparing for my change; health, in a cheerful performance of Christian, relative, and social duties; knowledge, in trying all, and holding fast that which is best; crosses and losses, in learning the vanity of the world; answers of prayer, in returns of praise; delays, in patience; disappointment, in resignation; changes in my lot, in submission; the uproar of kingdoms, in remembering that God rules the nations, and stills the tumults of the people; temptation to sin, in flying to the grace of God, distrusting self, and improving the promise; the falsifying friend, in adoring the faithfulness of God; strife and discord in church or state, in admiring the happy state; when the adorers are one before the throne;

manifestation, in humility; desertion, in holy diligence; correction, in amendment; gifts, for edification; time, for eternity; grace, for glory; and my soul in all her faculties, for God.

MEDITATION XXI.

THE SOUL'S ENLARGEMENT ON HIGH.

1757.

HERE the soul, confined to clay, is like a royal personage in prison, whose grand attendance is not seen, because he cannot come abroad. While this heaven-born *excellency* is here below, wisdom differs but a little from folly; understanding is but a few degrees removed from ignorance; and all the mental powers are feeble. But O the enlargement of the soul on high! This map of future glories, now folded up in flesh, shall be extended in breadth and length above. How penetrating then shall wisdom be! how active every power! how vigorous the flame of love! how enlarged the understanding! and how beautiful in the heights of glory shall the whole soul appear! Here, the child of grace, who was glad of a seat on the threshold of the temple, and could with joy have been but a door-keeper in the house of God, shall not only be a pillar in the temple above, but shall be a living temple, in which the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shall condescend to dwell, and fill for ever with his glory! O transcending bliss! to be dignified with such an inhabitant, who will write, in letters of immutable love, "this is my rest, here will I dwell forever, for I desire it, and delight in it." Yea, in fine, the soul which would be content to shine as the least star in the firmament of glory, shall, in the visions of God, be extended to a transparent heaven, and spread into a cloudless sky, in which all the perfections of God shall sparkle like the stars, and the graces of the Holy Spirit, like so many planets, shall roll round the Sun of righteousness, eager to approach his assimilating beams, his vivifying rays; while he, the sum and source of bliss, fixed in his love in the centre of the soul, shall spread his quickening flames to every corner of the heart. No more vexations, like

vapours exhaled by the heat of righteous indignation, shall fill my atmosphere with the suffocating fogs of anguish, or fall in showers of sorrow that end in streams of briny tears. Thunders and tempests there no more molest, where all is tranquility; no eclipse, where all is light; no shadow, where all is illumination; no evening, where all is everlasting day.

This *sky*, spread out by the fingers of redeeming love, this new-created *heaven*, is not only beauteous like a molten looking-glass, but shall be strong to stand for ever; and then, and there, O how shall union be strengthened, assimilation increased! How shall joy heighten, wisdom grow, knowledge ripen, communion be most free, and ecstasy and rapture swell, fill, and overflow for evermore!

MEDITATION XXII.

AFFLICTION THE LOT OF SAINTS BELOW.

May 13 & 19, 1757.

While I am mortal, I must taste of the waters of *Mara*, drink of the cup of adversity, and swim the tempestuous ocean. It is the perfection of angels, that they could never know the *pathos* of mental disquiet, or the pangs of anguish; and it is the happiness of departed saints, to obtain joy for mourning, a crown for crosses, and to forget their misery, if not wholly, yet to remember it as waters, once swelled to a dreadful flood, but that now for ever flow away. It is, then, the misery of the sons of men, only while here, to be, as it were, a mark set up for the arrows of tribulation, and to be engaged in constant war, and in perpetual broils; but it is the privilege of the Christian soldier to wear the shield of faith, with which he shall be able to quench the fiery darts of Satan, and to ward off the sling-stones of tribulation which pelt him from every quarter. How, then, may I triumph under all my afflictions, if I consider,

1. That they come from God, whatever, be the instrument: "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised; thou hast afflicted me in faithfulness."

2. That they are out of love: "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

3. That they are for my good: "Fathers of our flesh chastise us for their pleasure, but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness."

4. That they are for the exercise of grace, even of that noble grace of faith: "when I am afraid I will trust in thee; here faith is improved by affliction. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience. Not only so, but" (strange to tell!) "we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost."

5. They are noble antidotes against, and preservatives from sin: "Ere I was afflicted, I strayed, but now I keep thy word."

6. They assimilate the saints to their glorious Head, their sympathizing and feeling High Priest, who was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:" yea, in the work of redemption, the Captain of their salvation was made perfect through sufferings."

7. They give a general disgust of all created things, and prove the creature to be subject to vanity; hence, says one much inured to affliction, "I have seen an end of all perfection."

8. They teach humanity and sympathy to fellow-creatures in the same circumstances. Israel, from their being strangers, were to know the heart of a stranger, and deal kindly with him; and in this men ought to imitate him, "who suffered being tempted, that he might know how to succor them that are tempted, and be a merciful High Priest to his people."

9. They make very humble, and break the haughty mind, and bring down the lofty thought: "I shall go softly all my years, in the bitterness of my soul; my soul is as a weaned child:" and God has this in view by them, to hide pride from man.

10. They make the man rightly exercised therein, to know himself, and think on his former ways; to resort often to the throne of grace, go often to God, and in-

crease, as it were, the acquaintance between God and his soul: "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord."

11. They give clear and certain proof of the providence of God, who in six troubles and in seven delivers out of them. They preach his power, who makes his people pass through fire and water, not to other ruin, which we might well expect, but to a wealthy place, to heaven and to glory.

12. They prepare for glory, and make us fit to join the company of those that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their garments and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, therefore are they before the throne of God, and enjoy him in all his divine plenitude, world without end.

Shall I, then, despise the discipline of heaven, from which none are exempted, no, not the Son of God? Yea, all the heirs of glory are brought up in the school of the cross. O royal privilege, inestimable blessing, to be under the care of heaven, and tuition of God! Away, despondency, begone; thou wouldest cast a covering over the love of him who is my tower in troublous days; and make me conclude hardly of him who has thoughts of kindness towards me. Can infinite wisdom be at a loss to contrive, or infinite power nonplussed to bring to pass, to bring to perfection, my relief? Till then, I shall, I will believe; nor shall I look to means, or tie Omnipotence to them. Bring Israel to the rock to quench their thirst! What! Can solid flint be converted into a cooling stream? But, lo! the aged sides divide asunder, and let the promised springs refresh the parched hosts. Omnipotence, rather than not perform, will stop the course of nature, and make the restless billows rise in liquid walls, that Israel's bondaged sons may tread the trackless sand; will bid the raven feed, with morning and evening care, the wandering prophet; and forbid the fire to burn, or even to singe the garments of the glorious martyrs; yea, to feed his chosen people, he creates and rains down manna from above. Who, then, should bound his power, or doubt his faithfulness? God will never break his word, whatever men think, nor falsify his faithful promise. Cursed unbelief implies, that either God promises what he never intends to perform, or what he is not able to perfect; both which are

blasphemous; both which, O my soul! abhor, and rather rejoice in tribulation, which, when watered with the dew of heaven, is so far from being a barren soil, that it is the nursery of other graces, and brings forth patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope strong confidence, and sweet dependence on that God whose love is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost.

Again, in affliction the saints are ascertained of the love and care of God, when their prayers enter into his holy habitation, and their requests are answered to the joy of their soul. Hence it was sin in Israel to chide with Moses, and to quarrel with God, when brought into difficulties and dangers that seemed inextricable every way. Before them the Red Sea forbids them to advance, high hills on every side hinder their escape, and behind advancing hosts, swoln with rage, and ravening after blood, deny a safe retreat. Now man is more than nonplussed; all courage fails; faith and hope are low; fears are high; and, alas! their eye is not towards Him who can do all things, and who did instantaneously, to manifest his power, and fix his people's faith in himself, divide the raging floods, and build the restless waters in chrystal walls, to bound their steps in ways not known before, and clothe their rear in shady night, which darted pitchy darkness in the eyes of the keen pursuer.

Seeing Thou, O Governor of men! canst make crooked things straight, rough places plain, and affliction even to become a friend, I will rejoice in thee for ever, nor quarrel at thy conduct. Yea, wo to them; nay, wo to me, if I use any unlawful means, or be too anxious to set my nest on high, that I may be delivered from the power of evil. Agitating affliction, like the flux and reflux of the sea, casts out mire and dirt, sweeps its troubled bosom, refines the affections, and purifies the soul. Take courage, O my soul! and mind that yet a little while and sin is no more, and sorrow is no more, and temptations are no more, and troubles are no more, and time is no more: but yet a little while and love, and life, and light, and liberty, and joy, and glory, rapture and delight; in a word, God and all his fulness, are thine for evermore.

MEDITATION XXIII.

PRIVATE EXPERIENCE.

May 24, 1757.

O THE wonderful condescension of God! If he looks into heaven, among thrones and dominions, seraphim and cherubim, it is humility, stupendous humility. How much more when he casts his caring eyes on this inferior world! But still most of all, when he hears the cries, and answers the requests, of one who is infinitely less than the least of all his mercies! Thou hast heard, and I am revived; thou hast answered me, and I am confirmed in my belief of thy love towards me. O Lord! henceforth let all my love be thine, and on thee let all my faith depend. Now I know to whom to fly, and where it is safe to hide me. Now I know, that one day is to God as a thousand years, and that whatever he can do in a thousand years, he can do in one day. Now, to the friend that sticketh closer than a brother, with confidence I will cleave. Faith could never be too large in its requests to God in prayer; but God has many a time gone beyond faith in his returns of mercy, and made the blessing broader than belief itself, and more extensive than the utmost expectation.

Alas! it is night in the soul, when unbelief suggests that God's ear is heavy, that he cannot hear, and his hand shortened, that he cannot save. Lord, let such a night never spread over my horizon; but let the day-star of faith spread out the purpled morning, till the glorious sun bring in the perfect day. Mine extremity has been, and still shall be, thine opportunity to appear in my relief. Circumstances with me may come to my utmost, even to my last extreme, but can never come to thy utmost; but even though it were so, thou canst save to the uttermost all that come unto thee. Let others conclude of the conduct of providence as they please; but for my part, I approve and praise, and henceforth shall be at thy disposal, O glorious Governor of men and angels! Do with me as thou wilt, for thy kindness I have experienced from my cradle, and shall do to the tomb. The world is a stranger to the mystery of providence, and to the communion thy people have with thee therein. They know nothing of the

prayer of faith, nor of the return of prayer. When the soul is helped to take firm hold of God in the promise, and to look to him alone, and nothing else, and none besides, it is a prelude of approaching mercy. Now, if my conscious soul can blush, let me be ashamed out of my unbelief for ever. Blessed be thy name that thou hast not dealt with me as I have sinned, given me mine own measure into my bosom, and repaid my low thoughts of God with scanty outlettings of thy kindness. Now, O Lord! hold me in the hollow of thy hand, and under thy wings let me reside; while *any way* thou shalt dispose of me, shall *every way* delight me, till I am brought at last beyond the line of time, where changes and mutations shall never more take place.

MEDITATION XXIV.

ALL PLENITUDE IN CHRIST, TO ANSWER ALL THE WANTS OF HIS PEOPLE.

May 24, 1757.

In Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, that out of his fulness I may receive, and grace for grace.—Have I destroyed myself by sin? On him who is mighty to save from sin and wrath has God laid help for me.—Is my foolish mind darkened, and am I a guilty, polluted, and ruined wretch? Of God he is made to me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.—Am I of yesterday, and pass away as a shadow? He is the Ancient of days, and endureth for evermore.—Am I of few years, and full of trouble? He is my life, the length of my days, and the joy of my heart.—Am I exposed to contempt? He shall be to me for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty.—Am I travelling through the wilderness? He is my staff, and on him I lean all the way.—Am I on my last journey to my long home? He is my leader, and my reward.—Am I a sheep? He is my pasture, and my green pasture too.—Am I hungry and thirsty? He is my heavenly manna, and gives me to drink of the water of life.—Am I weary? He is my rest and refreshing.—Am I weak? He is strength to them that turn the

battle to the gate.—Am I oppressed and wronged? He is my judge, and my avenger.—Am I reproached? He will bring forth my judgment as the noon-day, and the reproach of his people he will wipe away.—Am I a stranger? He is my shield.—Am I a soldier? He is my Captain, and complete armour.—Must I fight in the field of battle? He is my covering in the day of war.—Do I sit in darkness? He is my light.—In doubts? He is my counsellor.—Am I ignorant? He is made of God wisdom to me.—Am I guilty? He is my justification.—Filthy? He is my sanctification.—Am I dead? He is my life, and quickens those that are dead in trespasses and sins.—Am I poor? He is the pearl of great price, and can fill all my treasures.—Am I blind? He, and none but he, can open the eyes of one born blind.—Am I naked? He has white raiment to cover the shame of my nakedness.—Am I in the very utmost necessity? He is a very present help in time of trouble.—Am I exposed to the hurricanes of adversity? He is a refuge from the storm, a covert from the blast, as rivers of waters in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.—Am I afraid of being left alone? He will never leave me, nor forsake me.—Do I wait the performance of the promise? He is the *yea* and *amen* of all the promises of God.—Do friends and brethren prove false? He is the friend that sticketh closer than a brother.—Am I in danger, as to my outward man, from diseases and death; as to my inward man, from sin and Satan? My life is hid with Christ in God; and when he shall appear, I shall appear with him, in my body immortal, and glorious in my soul.—Is my cause tabled in the court of heaven? There he is my Advocate.—Do I offend the Father? With him he is my Intercessor.—Do I suffer in my body, and am grieved in my mind? He bare my infirmities, and carried my griefs.—Is my mind disquieted, and my soul debared from peace? He is my feeling High Priest, and, in that he was tempted, knows to succour them that are tempted.—Am I injured in my estate, and reduced in my circumstances? He, the heir of all things, tho' he was rich, yet for my sake he became poor, that I thro' his poverty, might be made rich.—Do I suffer in my character? He was numbered with transgressors,

called a Samaritan, a glutton, a wine-bibber, and a devil.—Do I suffer in the death of friends, the nearest and dearest? Well, he in the fatal night was left alone; all the disciples forsook him and fled; and he, my only friend, can never die.—Must I undergo death, and be laid in the grave? He has taken away the sting of death, and spoiled the grave of its victory.—Must I rot? He shall be my resurrection, and raise me to immortality and bliss.—Would I go to God and to glory? He is my way, and must admit me into the palace of the great King, where I shall abide for ever.

In fine, he is my kinsman, my physician, my prophet, priest, and king, my father, head, and husband; and hereafter, when I shall dwell in the land of bliss, in the city of God, he will be the light thereof; and since I am to worship there for ever, he will be the temple of of the general assembly and church of the first-born. My wants are many, but his fulness is infinitely more. The morning-dews and fructifying showers water the fields, and refresh the parched furrows; but what are they to the exhaustless ocean? So what is all that I enjoy below, (and yet with thy goodness I am satisfied,) to the exuberant fulness of the heavenly bliss? O! then, how shall my soul be replenished when possessed of this infinite all, through eternity itself!

MEDITATION XXV.

PRAYER AND PRAISE.

May 29, 1757.

PRAYER and PRAISE is the employment of the two families of earth and heaven, the church-militant and the church-triumphant. Prayer is the native breathings of the heaven-born soul, the lispings of the child of grace, who, when grown to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus, and taken home to his higher house, breaks forth into melodious strains of praise. Prayer suits the state below, and praise the state above. Here I am vexed with sin and temp ation, with wants and infirmities, therefore I pray; but there I shall be blessed with the removal of sin and temptation, of wants and infirmities; therefore I shall praise. Here God

gives all, but for his gifts he will be inquired of by the house of Israel, that he may bestow them;—hence prayer is now my duty: But there he has given all things, and for his gifts he will be acknowledged by all the heavenly host;—hence praise then is my debt. Prayer is the soul pouring out itself to God in a state of trial; and praise is the soul's pouring out itself to God in a state of triumph. Now, as our life is a life of trouble, a complication of calamities, and a scene of affliction, prayer is more properly our continual exercise; for "if any man is afflicted, let him pray:" But on high, as all is peace, perfection, purity, and joy, praise is most properly their exercise; hence the hosts before the throne are said "not to rest day nor night" in praising him that sits thereon for ever. Yet as judgment is mixed with mercy, and our condition, however calamitous, has something in it comfortable; therefore praise also waits in Zion on the Hearer of prayer. The foundation of prayer is God's all-sufficiency and promise, and my insufficiency; for if I needed nothing, I should ask nothing, even at the hand of God; like those of old who said, *We are lords, we will come no more unto thee;* and as I must believe that God *is*, if I come unto him, so I must believe that God *has* to give, and will give according to his promise, if I ask of him.

O divine exercise below! for while I present my supplication, and narrate my grievances, I am some times transported from these glooms of anguish to a mental calm and tranquility of mind, where I am filled with rapture, while I by faith foresee all my requests fulfilled, and the causes of my sorrow annihilated in his love. By prayer, the soul's embassy on the most interesting affairs is carried to the court of heaven, sometimes in broken sentences, devout ejaculations, pious aspirations, sighs, and groans. By it I reveal my mind to the Most High, ease my burdened breast, and devolve all my difficulties on God, and then composedly rest. This is the Christian's evening and morning sacrifice to God; but the prayerless person is the profane atheist, who denies adoration to the Author of his being. O! then to be sensible of the majesty of God, for fear of whom my very flesh should tremble!

O deluded Papist! why commit thy suits to angels,

or departed saints? Though they were concerned for thee, which they are not, yet, seeing they attend the throne of God in the highest heavens, they can neither know of thy complaints nor thee, unless possessed of omniscience, which it were blasphemous to suppose? But is not God every where, and fills the very heart? As in him thou livest, movest, and breathest, so in him thou thinkest; and to him alone, through his beloved Son, thou shouldst pour out all thy complaints and supplications. Friends may be removed, acquaintance taken away, public worship without reach, liberty denied, I banished from my native land; yet the soul and prayer must never separate. The royal charter is lodged within my breast, that I may be robbed of every thing sooner than of liberty to come with boldness, through the blood of Jesus, to the throne of grace. The wicked, through his pride of face, will not call upon God; but it is my highest honor to be admitted into the presence of the King eternal, and to have his ear open, and attentive to my request. What is the saint's prayer book? Just affliction, and a body of sin and death lying hard upon him, and Christ, in all his divine offices and endearing relations. The first teaches him for what to pray, and the last to whom. In this divine exercise, God condescends to wrestle with his people, and in the struggle to be prevailed upon: "Let me go," says God; "I will not," says the wrestler, "till thou bless me." In prayer God and the soul meet, and hold communion together; then the curtain of heaven is drawn aside, that I may look in, and see my large possessions; then do I get a glance of the King in his beauty, and a glimpse of the excellences of the life above, so that I am filled with wonder, and desire to depart, and to be with Jesus. This is the well at which I drink the heavenly water, and am refreshed and strengthened for my journey. Lord, while allowed to come into thy presence with boldness, let secret sin, (ah! what avails it that the world does not know?) never cause a secret shame before thee. Meantime, may I know in whom I believe, to whom I reveal my cause, and utter my complaint, and rejoice because the day is approaching when I shall not need to ask any thing, because possessed of all. O eternal triumph! when my prayers

shall be turned into praise, my complaints into acclamations of joy, my mourning, sighs, and groans, into hosannas and endless hallelujahs; when beams of glory shall dilate my ravished powers of mind, and sacred plenitude overflow my raptured soul forever.

MEDITATION XXVI.

ON A BLIND BEGGAR.

June 1, 1757.

Poor man! thou walkest in darkness, though presented on every side with noon-day beams. Thou must commit thyself to the conduct of thy fellow-creatures, and by them be led from door to door, seeing "those that look out at the windows are darkened" Who can but sympathise with thy condition, and pity thee? Poison unknown to thee may be poured into thy cup; thou mayest fall into the fire or the water, or the ditch; mayest dash thy foot against every stone, and have the naked sword brandished at thy breast, while, ignorant of thy danger, thou makest no attempts to escape.

How melancholy, then, the case of the men that are spiritually blind, that drink the cruel "poison of asps, that fall into every sink of sin, that run into every danger, rush "on the bosses of Jehovah's buckler," and oppose their hardened breast against the naked point of justice's flaming sword! And how sad that the persons in this condition, ignorant of their danger, should sport with wrath, and make a mock at sin!

If we heard of whole nations struck blind, and not one left to lead another, but all perishing in this deplorable situation, how would we feel in the tenderest manner for them! Now, are there not whole nations that sit in the region and shadow of death, that grope in the darkness, and never find their way to heaven? For them, therefore, we should feel in a manner tender above expression, from the very bottom of our souls. To the benighted tribes, would not mankind from every quarter of the globe, send to afford them all possible relief! And should not all Christian powers exert themselves to their very utmost, to spread the saving knowledge of a Saviour among the heathen? Could a man recover the blind, how would they gratefully accept the

cure, and bless the healing hand! But, in a land where life and immortality are brought to light, how many sit in the shade, and will not quit their gloomy cell for all the beauties of the day? Happy those who have the eyes of their mind opened, and in his heavenly light see light clearly; who see the deformity of sin, the beauty of holiness, the excellency of religion, the necessity of the new birth, the preciousness of Christ, and shortly, in the light of glory, shall see as they are seen.

MEDITATION XXVII.

LOVE IN SAINTS.

Love is a passion planted in the human breast, which once was wholly a right seed, but is now turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine. Ere sin entered into the world, love wholly centered on God; then the fire burnt purely, and the soul ascended in the sacred flame to God. Then there was sweet intercourse between heaven and earth, and man maintained communion with his Maker. Admiring the beauties of creation, his soul with pleasure ascended up the streams of created excellencies, to the fountain of uncreated glory; and, ravished with the view, he saw his interest in his Maker to be of another kind than the lower world could claim. This was bliss, and it was this made paradise so near akin to heaven. This, and not the blowing flowers; this, and not the verdant groves; this, and not the spreading streams; this, and not the fragrant gums; this, and not the bending boughs; this, and not the warbling tribes; this, and not a cloudless sky; this, and not the sight of angels; this, and not their mutual love, made our first parents happy in their first abode.

But man no sooner admitted sin and Satan in, than God in justice drove him out of paradise, and from his station too; and what tongue can tell his sad condition now? His love is not only cooled towards God, but corrupted from God; hence he worships the creature more than the Creator, who is God over all blessed for ever. As the lion with terrible majesty hunts his prey through the trembling forest, while the spider, with silent cunning, catches the fly sporting on the window,

or entangled under the web; so, from the throne to the dunghill, every person pursues vanities adapted to his state, but quite destructive to his immortal soul. O how has man gone back by a perpetual backsliding! God punishes it in an awful manner; for as they like not to retain God in their knowledge, so God gives them up to a reprobate mind. They choose their ways, and God chooses their delusions. God is not in the counsel of their heart, and they are not under the conduct of his Spirit. They provoke God to anger by their vanities, and he puts them to pain with vexation and wo. But what is still more to be wondered at, is, that after God has given the brightest manifestations of his infinite love, in readmitting the rebel into friendship, through the sufferings of his well-beloved Son, man should still pursue shadows, and pour his love on perishing trifles. And art not thou, my soul, blame-worthy here, that art busied every day about vanities, but cold, key-cold, in love to the Perfection of beauty."

Surely the angels of light, and the spirits of just men made perfect, are surprised to see the expectants of the same glory, deluded, charmed and enchanted with perishing vanities, and not enraptured with the Chiefest among ten thousand. The inhabitants of the better country despise our sin-burnt beauties, and worm-eaten excellencies; yea, they would blush to mention our delights, or to take up the object of our love in their lips. What would a seraph care for the sceptre of a terrestrial empire? or a glorified saint for the government of an earthly kingdom? And why should I, then care so much for less things, who, in my expectations, am travelling to the same place, and rising to the same glory?

May I, then, for a moment draw aside the curtain of time, glance into the other world, and get a glimpse of the object of my love. Ah me! the vision is too bright, the glory too refulgent for my feeble sight! See all the heavens enlightened with his glory; crowned with majesty divine, he fills his lofty throne, and sways the sceptre far through all existence. See seraphim and cherubim bow before him, and mighty angels fall prostrate at his feet. Yea, see him in thy nature stand and plead for thee, not forgetful of thy need, nor deaf to thy distress, amidst his boundless glory. See approaching

myriads, even the ransomed nations, sick of love, adore him in unutterable strains. And why dost thou not love him? Thou canst not doubt his power, for he is God; nor his compassion, for he is man; nor his salvation, for he is God-man in one person. All heaven is eternally enamoured with him; and it would be rebellion to bid them lift their love, and lay it on any other. The Father loves him, angels love him, saints love him; and it is pleasant in the eye of God that the excellency of all fulness should dwell in him. Under how many ties am I to love him! for what he hath been, what he is, and what he will be to me; for what he hath done, what he is doing, and what he will do for me. Before he made the world my salvation was secured in the sure decree; thus with an everlasting love he loved me; and why with loving-kindness should not I be drawn? Then he rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men.

Again, I should love him for what he is. But here words cannot express my thoughts, nor my thoughts my subject. He is the mighty God, on my side! The Creator of both worlds, for me! His perfections are infinite, innumerable, and eternal; he is self-existent, self-sufficient, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, unchangeable, and independent. He is holy, just, and good, merciful, faithful, long-suffering and compassionate. In a word, God is love; and love begets its like in the soul of every saint, who is filled with wonder at the person of Immanuel, who is every thing that they or I can need. He satisfies every longing desire, performs every endearing office, as prophet, priest, and king; fills every tender relation, as kinsman, friend, brother, father, husband. Love shall be the subject of my song for ever.

Again, I should love him for what he will be to me. Now, he will be my God even unto death; my shield and sun in the dark vale of dissolution. He will bring me into the palace of the King, with joy on every side; will be my temple in the highest heavens, and my portion through the endless ages of eternity.

Likewise, how should I love him for what he has done, is doing, and will do to me!—For me he hath done great things, whereof my soul is glad. He has, by making his soul an offering for sin, satisfied justice, mag-

nified the law, removed my guilt, and reconciled my soul to God.—For what he is doing: He is appearing in the presence of God for me, pleading my cause, interceding on my behalf, and offering my prayers with his own incense at his Father's throne. He is ordering all things well for me, perfecting what concerns me, hearing my petitions, marking my requests, numbering my groans, telling my wanderings, and putting my tears into his bottle; and, as my feeling High Priest, sympathizing with me in all my afflictions.—Lastly, for what he will do: but who, besides thee, O God! knowest what thou hast laid up for those that wait on thee? Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor can the most capacious soul conceive, of that abundant bliss, which only can be revealed in the enjoyment, and known in the possession. O happy day! when I shall put off mortality, and this clay-tabernacle, and join the shining assembly of sinless adorers, whom he feeds and feasts with the fatness of the higher house, satisfies with his likeness, replenishing every power with his plentitude, and ravishing the whole soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Come, then, my soul! look from the height of perishing things to the mount of God, where every soul glows with sacred love, and dwells among the assimilating flames. Didst thou see a man of three-score years chasing flies and feathers, like the child of three, what wouldst thou think of him? And while the world is thy chase, what, O my demitted soul! shall I conclude of thee? Ransack the whole creation of God, and see if all its excellences together can vie with one ray of his glory, one beam of his love: then let his love to thee constrain thy love to him, and thus begin the work of heaven on earth.

The perfection of bliss in heaven shall consist in the perfection of love, for love is the sum of felicity Take away love from heaven, heaven could no more boast of its unbounded bliss. Life, light, love, are the trinity of perfection, and the perfection of the adorable Trinity. Of all the heavenly graces, love only returns to heaven, without any change, but of putting on perfection, and casting out fear. To dwell in love, and to dwell in God, cannot be separated; and the more I dwell in love, the nearer I dwell to God below; and when at last I rise to

the highest degrees of love, I shall arrive at the nearest communion with God.

Roll on, ye longed-for days, and come, thou everlasting dawn, that I may plunge into this sea of bliss, this ocean of eternal love, and know what it is to love him to the full, whom here I scarcely dare allege I love.

MEDITATION XXVIII.

LOVE IN GOD.

Love in the saints is a noble grace, but superlatively glorious in God. On it angels look, and admire; and I should look and adore. Every thing in God has the majesty of a God. Hence his mercy is in the heavens; his truth reacheth to the clouds; his justice is like the mountains; his judgments are a great deep; his pity is like that of a father; his patience great to a miracle; he is ready to forgive; his goodness is abundant unto all; and his love, in height, breadth, depth, and length, past knowledge. Although the mercy-seat that dwells so long between the cherubim of gospel-grace shall in a little be turned into the fiery throne of judgment, and long-abused patience into indignation and wrath; when the royal signet, that sealed the salvation of thousands, shall stamp the irreversible doom of an unbelieving world; yet love in God shall undergo no change. Here, it shines as the morning-star, through the scattered clouds; there, as the noon-day sun, in the illuminated regions of glory.

"*From everlasting to everlasting*," is the epithet of love. A love without beginning and without end, gives a bliss without limits and bounds. This amazing love of God produces a sweet similitude in the love of his saints; so that, as the one measures with the existence of God, from everlasting to everlasting, the other measures with the existence of the new creature, from the hour of conversion to all eternity. Their gifts shall end, their graces change, faith be turned into vision, hope into fruition; but love shall neither end nor change; it shall heighten and brighten in the altitude of glory, when the drop is lost in the ocean, when the soul ar-

rives at its centre, and rests, with ineffable complacency, and unknown delight in God.

Again, O how free is this love of God! nothing moving him to love. When we love, it is for something we think excellent and agreeable to us; but he loves the naked child when weltering in its blood, and, as a proof of non-such love, dresses, salts, swaddles, clothes it, and makes it comely through his comeliness being put upon it.

Again, his love is a full love. The oceans ebb and flow; if at one time they cover the shores, at another time they leave their beds bare and dry; but his love is perfect in its plenitude, notwithstanding these boundless oceans that have watered the whole universe; that have run in mighty torrents among the angelic and seraphic hosts above, and in amazing inundations among fallen men below.—Though there be repeated manifestations of love to his hidden ones, and thousands of his favourites feast on this heavenly food, while travelling through the howling wilderness; yea, through the egress of love, through the unnumbered ages of eternity, shall be continued to the glorified throng, still its ardour and exuberance will be evermore the same. The ocean will not be one drop less for all the waterings of the fields of bliss. After the Sun of Righteousness, through a duration in eternity beyond conception, and above the reach of thought, has illuminated the spacious continent of glory with his beams, not one ray, not one irradiation, shall be in the least diminished.

Again, his love is efficient, active, and an operative love. I may love a fellow-creature, or an absent friend, and yet avail them nothing, nor they so much as know it; but the love of God, like the light, reveals itself wherever it is. Love draws, and we run; his love constrains, compels our love; for a pardoned sinner cannot choose but love. Wherever the heavenly spark falls, it sets the soul in a flame.

Again, the love of God is a fixed and unchangeable love; and the more the soul is in sorrow or distress, the more free and full are the communications of divine love. In the time of need, the world's love will give us the slip; but in the most calamitous circumstances,

sacred love performs the part of two loves, and stick-eth closer than a brother. Mortals' love, (alas! how many can attest the truth of this!) may to-day appear ardent, steadfast, and sincere, but to-morrow be entirely cooled; yea, converted into slander, hatred, and revenge. But let all the sons of God know, that divine love shall be to them what the holy waters were to the prophet, ever on the increase, till it be an ocean to swim in for ever. Against fears on every side this is comfort, that God will rest in his love.

Divine love is also a beneficent love. Jonathan loved David exceedingly, but could not do much for him, nor save him from being expelled his native country; but the love of God is fruitful of every blessing; is the tree that bears all kinds of fruits that nourish the soul, and feast every power. The love of poor men can bring no advantage to the persons loved; but when God sets his love upon a sinner, all at once, he who had nothing of late, has all things, life, liberty, friends, riches, glory, a kingdom; sufficiency here, and all-sufficiency hereafter; in a word, all that can be named, sought after, wished for, or thought upon. Then, ye sons of earth! hug yourselves in the embrace of wealth, and bless your own condition, but presume not that you are the favourites of Heaven because his common providence pours upon you. As for me, may I be the object of this love, and, in spite of poverty, I am rich; in spite of sin, I am secure, and walk on triumphing to the better country.

But again, the love of God is an intimate love. O how the high and lofty One reveals the secrets of his covenant, and the sweets of his love to the soul, where he condescends to come and dwell! When by the Holy Ghost the love of God is shed abroad in the soul, what heavenly joy refreshes the whole inner man! "I know thee by name," says Job; "I beseech thee show me thy glory," says Moses. The intimacy begun in time, is the bliss of eternity, and in greater or lesser degree is the privilege of every believer. The more our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, the more of his divine likeness we shall put on; and in the other world, in the different degrees of assimilation to God, consist the different degrees of glory.

Again, the love of God is infinite; and what that is, none but an infinite Being knows. Ours is a spark, his the sun; ours a drop, his the ocean.

Again, his love is uninterrupted. Not sin within us, hell without us, nor Satan accusing us at the throne, can interrupt his love; this is encouragement to serve him in spite of sin, and in the face of enemies.

Lastly, his love is eternal. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but love will not. Time must end, but love attends the saints beyond the grave. Death cools the love of the nearest relations, but cannot separate from the love of God. Love is the quintessence of bliss, the heart of heaven, the joy of angels, the song of the redeemed, and the character of God. O happy day! when I shall rise to enjoy love that transcends the glory of the redeemed, and all the anthems of angelic choirs!

MEDITATION XXIX.

DISSOLUTION.

If there is a time to rejoice, there is also a time, yea, many a time to mourn; and God has set the one over against the other, that men may not forget themselves. This day I have attended the funeral of a friend, who is carried away from his weeping widow, and fatherless children, who all bewail him; yea, sighs may be heard, and sorrow seen in the countenances of his acquaintance. With all the pomp of woe we attend him to the tomb; friends gaze wistfully as the envious mould conceals him from their sight. The ceremonies are concluded, and all retire as concerned with him no more.—Though sea and land cannot separate between living friends, yet three feet deep of earth separates betwixt the dead and the living, unties bonds, dissolves relations, and perpetuates the disjunction.

Poor woman! why dost thou weep? Thy husband is not dead, but sleepeth. His weary dust is not carried to gloomy confinement, but laid to rest on a bed of undisturbed repose. He is delivered from toil, from trouble, and from sin. The sword of the foe cannot affright him; the tongue of the slanderer cannot disturb him; the envy of hell cannot distress him. Fire

may calcine his lifeless ashes, but cannot consume his hope. Earthquakes may cast his body out of the grave, but cannot awake him out of his sleep. While thus his body rests, his soul triumphant reigns; and having dropt his frail mortality, he is now as an angel of God. Reserve thy tears for more mournful times, nor grieve for him who is happier than thou canst conceive. Enviest thou for his sake? Wouldst thou have him less happy, that thou mayest be less miserable? Though thou shouldst be drowned in sorrow, he is all song; and not the deepest anguish of his dearest friends, though placed in his eye, could give him one moment's pain, interrupt the anthem, or mar the heavenly melody. Why should all thy mental powers suffer in the tempest of thy soul, because the gracious Pilot of souls from storms and tempests, darkness and distress, raging seas and roaring winds, has landed thy friend safe on life's pacific shore? A little, and a friendly gale shall blow thee after him. Then spend not the short, (who can tell how short?) interval in repining at his passage, but in preparing for thine own. Indeed, a word sad enough, thou art a widow. Well, God is the widow's judge out of his holy habitation, and can be better to thee than ten husbands. If faith be strong, thy refuge is not weak. Hast thou fatherless children? leave them to God, he will preserve them alive; and happy the orphans whose God is the Lord!

But what instructions should arise from the whole to me? Why, I should live above this present state, because I am shortly to pass from it. Neither should I envy the worlding's heaps, or the increase of his glory, which cannot descend after him to illuminate the solitary cell. The inside of the royal sepulchre is as dark to the interred king, as the intermingling mould is to the meanest corpse; and mortality is preached alike from both. None have a glorious passage through the vale of the shadow of death, but such as walk in the light of his countenance, whose beams dispel the glooms of death, and guide them through the darksome steps to bright eternal day!

Again, in this man, (and a few days will realize the scene,) I see myself dead, buried, and forgot. And however fond our friends may be of us when alive, yet

when we breathe our last, we must be buried out of their sight. O to have an interest in that best of friends, in that sweetest love, who, when the whole world casts us out, will receive us to himself.

MEDITATION XXX.

THE DEATH OF THE WICKED.

THE wicked and the righteous live a different life, and die a different death. Have not mine eyes beheld the melancholy scene?—one posting into the unseen world, unprepared and thoughtless, unless conscience, though a long slumberer, be unwelcomely awaked at last. But perhaps he may sleep on in carnal security, till, stripped of flesh, he plunge into the raging flames! Have not mine eyes seen a dying person, (me thinks I see him still,) tossing and tumbling under the gnawing pangs of some acute disease; sleep debarred from his eyes, on whose lids sat the shadow of death, calling often, and in a melting manner, for help from his physician, but in vain? Every power is invaded, every part besieged, and death denies a moment's respite from the war. Yet we hear not one word of his eternal state, of his immortal soul; nor one request for mercy, from God as reconciled in his Son. The world, when well, was all his care; nor can he alter, when sick, his favourite schemes. As he listed he lived, and as he lived he dies. As the tree grows, so it falls. Then may I live to God, and die in God;—grow to grace, and fall to glory!

Friends and spectators are very much concerned to see him writhing under the agonies of death, and sympathize with every groan; but for the most part look no further, nor pity his soul, that is in a little to fall into the hands of the living God. But the combat is increased, the attack is visibly more stout, and strength to resist is sensibly decayed. His friends, careful but too late, call mightily for prayer now; as if God could be forced into friendship with the man, at his last moments, who has been all his life his foe, or heaven won for him who never sought for it; yet prayer is our duty at the last, but dangerous to delay to the last. At length,

amidst insupportable agonies, he yieldeth up the ghost, and is no more. Attending friends pour out their sorrows in a flood of tears, yet are not a little glad to see his suffering body lie at rest; and then they dress his stiffening limbs, and wound his lifeless clay. They are fondly ignorant of the state of his soul, and gladly hope the best. But will ye talk deceitfully for mercy, to the injury of adorable justice? At death, shall heaven be his possession, who would not have a gift of it on earth? Shall he dwell with God in eternity, who walked contrary to God in time, nor repented at death?

All is hushed, and those concerned are quiet again; the tears dry up, and it is irreligious boldness to look beyond the grave. But mine imagination follows him. Forbear, presumptuous thought, and mind thine own concerns! Ah! I must peep into eternity, and, through the telescope of revelation, see him brought before the bar, and found to have lived and died without God! Oh! his fearful doom! vengeance awakes against him, the vengeance of eternal fire, and he is thrown into the flaming gulf of hell, where deep he sinks, below my venturous thought. His friends refresh themselves, and comfort one another, till they recover their wonted mirth and jocundity; but not a drop of water to cool his scorched tongue! The ensuing night shall partly repay the watching and wakeful nights they have had about their friend; but his eyes shall never shut, but keep open with ghastly stare, looking for the wrath, however much he feel, which is still "the wrath to come." Their sorrow gradually abates, but his anguish is ever on the increase. Our remembrance of him rots into oblivion, as his clay crumbles into corruption; but wrath never forgets its prey, vengeance never forgets to afflict.

Still my sympathy would penetrate the dark abyss, and look with pity on my damned acquaintance. Poor soul! where is all thy usual mirth and merry jests? are they now for ever fled, and thine uninterrupted exercise, unceasing howlings, and unavailing complaints? Now thou art where sympathy avails thee not, where pity cannot enter; no purgatory this, through which thou shalt one time or other pass; it is thy final doom, thy fixed eternal state. My troubled thoughts are wea-

ry among the shriekings of the damned, nor longer can abide among these shades of horror. Yea, now I am not bound to sympathize with the eternal, irreconcileable enemies of Jehovah and the Lamb. The day of grace is past, the hour of mercy over; sin is finished, and hath brought forth eternal death; despair is final, enmity consummate, and the breach is wide as the sea of eternity; who can heal it?

Let me turn, then, my voice unto the sons of men. A few moments, and your state, like his, is fixed; will ye, then, adventure not only to sport, but to sin away your time, which is so precious, and in which you are to make sure an happy eternity? There are no offers of salvation beyond the grave; there is no godly repentance in the pit. Now your misery has the heavenly balm of God's mercy, and here mercy rejoiceth against judgment; but there your misery shall not, even in its longest duration and highest degree, excite mercy, but rather awake fiercer wrath; while in your agonies you blaspheme the awful avenger, who in the destruction of mercy-despisers shall rest satisfied. Then give your eyes no sleep, nor slumber to your eye-lids, till you find a dwelling in your heart for God, and a chamber in his promise, an interest in his Son for your soul, that you may be hid in the day of visitation, and in the desolation that shall come from far.

MEDITATION XXXI.

THE TRAVELLER.

Gentlemen of taste go frequently abroad; and it is so much in vogue to wander over some part of the world once in life, that he is hardly accounted an accomplished gentleman that has not spent a part of his time in climes and countries remote from that which gave him birth; whence he returns rich in observations, and mightily improved, having made an accurate survey among whatever people he came, whether as to the genius, stature, complexion, religion, laws, government, rites, and dress of the natives; or the merchandize, produce, rivers, soil, air, language, &c. of the country. And does this render men more agreeable company, to

have glanced from head to foot, as it were, over only one page of the great volume of creation? for what is our earth in comparison of God's handy works?

His observations must be few, since the shortness of his life forbids him to stay long abroad, unless he intends to drop his dust in the tour; which unhappy event has many a time sent sorrow across the seas, for the dear youth that shall see his native land no more.

Now, to compare earthly things with heavenly, how accomplished must the soul be, that shall be an eternal searcher into the perfections of God, an entranced beholder of the beauties of paradise; that shall take a tour through the fields of bliss, and be a traveller in the region of glory! If this molehill heap be surprising for many things found therein, as mountains towering to the clouds, volcanoes vomiting melted fire, extremes of heat and cold, and creatures of tremendous shape and size, and all in this small speck of creation, what must the numerous excellences be of his kingdom, which is higher than the heavens! O the beauties on the other side creation! O the glories that beam in pure essential day! All things in time only improve us for one another in the things that are temporal; but there the improvement is for eternity, and the mind enlarged for God. O happy day! when I shall rove over the extent of paradise, lost in wonder, and ravished with delight, amidst his excellences! O the innate beauty of his laws, the glory of his reign, the splendour of his throne, the mysteries of his being and subsistence, and the wonders of his love! O the comely proportion of the inhabitants of the better country! O the rivers of pleasures that water the true Canaan! How pure the religion of the inner temple! What ecstacy and ravishment shall rise from beholding all these beatitudes, all these glories, as one interested in them all!

Travel, then, ye sons of fortune, towards every wind; rest not in the old world, but ransack the new: Let nothing pass unobserved, and be delighted with the productions of the fertile Arabia, or the teeming Indies: Let the magnificence of the opulent East attract your attention, and the curiosities of the learned West gain your regard: Not satisfied with the narrow appearance of this atom hung upon nothing, I wait for the dawn,

ing of celestial day, to commence an everlasting traveller through all the glories above. Surveying the perfections of God, I shall hold on my journey through unnumbered ages. In my tour, I shall find curiosities which could never enter into the conception of travellers below. Let them talk of the magnificent structure, or pleasant situation of the metropolis of every kingdom, I shall see the city of the mighty King, whose foundations are precious stones, whose walls are jasper, whose gates are pearls, and the streets and city pure gold, like transparent glass; whose laws are love, and whose light is glory. I shall see the people that are immortal, and cannot die;—a kingdom where every subject is a king, where every servant has a throne, and sways a sceptre. I shall see an assembly of worshippers, that are all priests, high-priests, and are admitted into the holy of holies for ever. I shall see the blessed effects of death, and the ecstacies of men that spring from the agonies of our incarnate God. I shall see finite and infinite dwelling in one person, children of wrath made heirs of life, and the family of heaven married to the family of earth, yea, to the heirs of hell! These are wonders to be wondered at, mysteries to be dwelt upon, divine curiosities to be recorded on the table of my heart, and mentioned in the grateful accents of my song. Then hasten, Lord, that day when I shall *set out* for eternity, and commence my journey, my immediate journey to thy throne, there to explore the adorable perfections of the Godhead, the mysteries of the Trinity, and all the glories of the upper world.

MEDITATION XXXII.

GRACE IN THE BLUSH, SIN NOT ASHAMED.

It is one of the most surprising things that I have ever observed, That sanctity should be ashamed to look out, but iniquity show itself at noon. Hence it is one of the greatest blessings promised to the lower world, that "iniquity, as ashamed, shall stop her mouth;" which supposes, that in bad times she has an impudent loquacity, both a whore's forehead in refusing to be ashamed, and the tongue of a strumpet in scorning to

be silenced. Hence the company of rakes over their bottle, are not shy to open to another the mystery of iniquity in their most abandoned actions, and to glory in their shame. But when do the saints of God in private conversations, to the praise of glorious grace, tell one another what the Lord hath done for their souls, and rejoice in his goodness? O deplorable degeneracy! shall iniquity not only rage, but reign; and righteousness, like the natives of a conquered kingdom, that dare not show their countenance among their new neighbors, lurk in secret? Is this, professors of piety, your kindness to your friend? Shall open rebellion against heaven be winked at by those that are maintained at the King's table? Shall the words of sinners be stout against God, and your words not stout against them? Who should be ashamed, if the sons of darkness are not? Who should face the broad day, if the abettors of virtue do not? Yet the one will avow the very practice of iniquity, the other hardly the profession of piety! The gentlemen of the army will dare, in defiance of the laws, to swear by the sacred name, while the ambassador of Jesus is ashamed to own his office, or avow his message, in reproving the open breach of Heaven's eternal law.

It is the most unpolite appearance one can make in company now-a-days, to speak any thing of religion, or let it be known that you are a Christian. Better reveal the secrets of necromancy, and the arts of magic, than to speak of the depravity of human nature, and the necessity of regeneration. If you speak one sentence in favor of godliness, the spiritual life, or heavenly-mindedness, it is hardly pardonable by the free-thinkers of the day. If you adventure to say any thing against the more prevailing and fashionable follies, every one will be on your top, and you will be set up as a scare-crow in the table-discourse of all your acquaintance, who will pity your frenzy, and pronounce you delirious. And if it comes abroad that you live near God, and above the vanities of time, you will forthwith be a gazing-stock to all, who will stare at you as if you were come from another world, and were not a fellow-creature. But if you keep silence at sin, smile at their *peccadillos*, and live in concert with the madmen of the world, you will be

the best company, and the most social man alive. Thus, by continual scoffing, sin is grown brazen-faced, and religion wears the blush. Yea, some well-meaning men are sinful temporizers, by keeping silence, through the fear of men, which brings a snare, when they ought to speak.

But remember, that they who are ashamed of the Son of man before this adulterous and sinful generation, of them, (and how will ye like that?) shall the Son of man be ashamed before his holy angels. Be bold, ye sons of virtue, then; maintain the rights of heaven against the troops of hell. Take courage to yourselves; the cause is good, and conquest shall crown the stout contender in the quarrel of God. Wherever sin, in the discourse of any, vilely vents itself, expose to shame the ugly monster. A consciousness of guilt is in it, and guilt is always interwoven with fear and shame so that it must surely blush; but, if their seared consciences flout at thee, pity them, and warn them of the fearful awakening that awaits the long and thoughtless slumberer. If thou live near God, live undisturbed, though the lips of malice exclaim against thee as an hypocrite, as one full of ostentation, or a brain-sick fanatic.

I know the cause of silence in many a pious soul, is, lest they should be left to fall away from what they have so zealously espoused, to the dishonor of religion, and opening the mouths of enemies to blaspheme. But beware of circumscribing the grace of God, lest he measure to thee according to thine opinion of him. Never let the fear of falling into sin in some future time, drive thee from thy present duty; for to neglect present duty, is present sin. If thou shalt fall from the support of his declarative glory he may cut off from thee the supplies of his grace, and make that which thou unjustly fearest, justly come upon thee. Be for God in thy day of integrity, and God shall be for thee in the day of temptation. Exercise thy grace for his praise, and his grace shall always be sufficient for thee.

Alas! after all that can be said, there is still room to complain; for, if this detestable taciturnity that prevails in our day, increase as it has done for some time past, it will not be long till there will not be a word of religion in the mouths of the inhabitants of this isle.

But, may this spiritual captivity be turned as suddenly as streams come rushing from the south hills, when there falls a heavy rain.

Such is the deplorable indifferency about divine things among the sons of men at this day. Oh! when will matters mend? when shall religion be openly avowed as an honor to the rational soul, and every one speak of God, and for his glory? Let the Spirit be poured out from on high, and the wilderness turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field rise into a statelier forest. And let Israel take root downward, and fill the world with fruit. Then shall iniquity, as ashamed, stop its mouth, and hide its head; then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. Such, (O to see them!) should surely be some of the glorious days of the Son of man.

MEDITATION XXXIII.

GOING TO A FAIR.

The heavenly mind has this advantage, that it can spiritualize every business, and moralize all occurrences of life. As, then, I am this day going to a fair, let me call to mind the comparisons, or the similitude betwixt this market and the market of grace.

1. From all quarters men come hither; so is it in the market of grace. 2. None are hindered to come here to merchandize; so is it in the market of grace. 3. All kinds of goods are to be found here; so is it in the market of grace. 4. Parties meet here, bargains are made, and business done; so is it in the market of grace. 5. Numbers are to be found here, who cannot tell what brought them hither; so many attend the ordinances from custom, to see, or to be seen. 6. The fair is by public authority; so is the market of grace. 7. Some stand all day idle; so is it in the market of grace. 8 Some go home with large profits; so do all they that rightly improve the market of grace. 9. But some return immense losers; so must they that slight the market of grace. 10. Thieves, tinkers, and pick-pockets, attend here to ruin honest folk; so Satan, sin, and worldly cares often rob us of spiritual things in the

market of grace. 11. Dealers, returning home, converse wholly on the course of their business through the day; as they who have found the true riches, the pearl of great price, in the market of grace, will speak, think, and meditate much thereon ever after. 12. This fair is but of one day; so the market of grace comes to an end, and people may outlive the day of grace; therefore, every one should embrace the present offer.

But how great the excellency of the one above the other! 1. All things here are for the body; there all things are for the soul. 2. Nothing here goes without money; but all things in the glorious market of grace are without money, and without price. 3. If I sit my market to-day, I shall repent to-morrow; but the market of grace is continued to many poor souls many years. 4. Without the one we may live; but wanting the other, we must die. 5. It is indifferent whether we buy or not here; but, in the market of grace, we must be dealers, or we dishonour God, and sin against our own souls. 6. To take goods here without money, is dishonesty; but, to offer our pelf for the merchandize of heaven, is damnable. 7. We plead and press for commodities at a low price here; but God importunes, and presses us to buy the gold tried in the fire, that we may be eternally rich. But O how are the men of the world assiduous about the affairs of life, while they neglect the great concern! Well do we know what makes for our behoof, as to the things of time; but how careless are we with respect to the things of eternity! A shower will excuse from walking two miles to a sermon; but a very rainy day will not deter us from this place of business, though three times the distance. O corrupt nature! that counts it a great deal of happiness to meet with merry companions, to drink, rove, ramble, see, and be seen. But how far beneath the dignity of the human soul, to forget itself amidst a hurry of trifling concerns for a transitory life.

It is, indeed, the duty of all men to attend to their business, and guide their affairs with discretion. They may meet, therefore, on days appointed for that purpose; but, when the mind gets a wrong set, by the vanities that are to be seen there, is infected with a roving disposition, and can trifle away time that is so precious,

and must so punctually be accounted for; when men continue till liquor inflame them, how far is this beneath the Christian character! It should be our constant care, then, wherever we go, whatever we do, to bear the omniscience of God in our mind, that, while we manage our business with discretion, we may serve our God with undistracted devotion.

MEDITATION XXXIV.

AFTER SICKNESS.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all his kindness unto me! The sorrows of death compassed me about, the pains of the grave took hold on me; my feeble joints were made to smite together; disease attacked every part, and rapidly prevailed. Mine eyes, with languid looks, spoke forth mine inward trouble. My throbbing heart spread sense of pain through every member, and vexing dreams disturbed my night's repose. But what was all this to that confusion my sympathizing soul was in? No composure there. I could not meditate with calmness on my final change, that seemed to await me; nor could I inquire aright into the case of my soul, that I thought would soon be dislodged this body, and brought before the bar of God. Hence I learn, that health is the proper time to prepare for sickness, death, eternity. The new, the spiritual life, is too late in beginning, when the lamp of natural life is about to be blown out. Yet the men of the world postpone the most momentous business to their last moments. O! my soul, come not thou into their assembly; with their procrastination, mine honour, be not thou united!

But what shall I render to the Lord for adding to my days! I yet live, yea, and am well. The canopy of the heavens might have been converted into the crumbling clods, or covering worms; the light of the world into the shadow of death, and time into eternity; and my broken strains of praise into perpetual silence; for the living only can praise thee, as I do this day. By how many ties am I thine? I am thine to all eternity, because redeemed from everlasting wrath; and thine

while I dwell below, because redeemed from temporal death. Many times, before I could expect it, deliverance came, and mercy prevented me. Shall thy goodness be forgot, or thy love seem little in mine eye? No, for should not that life be spent to thy praise, that is preserved by thy power, restored in thy pitying mercy, lengthened out in thy love, and covered with thy protection? Death, with his malignant troops, is now again discharged the field, and I almost a prisoner of the grave, set at liberty, before I was fast locked in the irons of corruption. Was my life precious in thine eyes, who am of so little moment among so many millions of beings dependent on thy throne? Would I have been missed among them, if removed? No; yet thy never-failing kindness would not, as yet, let me drop among the congregation of the dead! How should my love live to thee, whose love to me is so active, exuberant, and full! With the recovery of my health, let every grace revive: and let my soul, as a watered garden, be put into a flourishing condition. And, if spared to old age, when others fade, may I bring forth fruit, be fat, and flourishing. Yea, in the last decline of nature, when my outward man decays, let my inward man be renewed day by day; may my views of his glory be more bright, my faith more active, my hope more fixed, my heart more established, my affections more purified, my desires more heavenly, my longing after complete fruition, and uninterrupted communion with God, increased, and my soul set on fire of love, and filled with heaven, till I, at last, am taken into that land, where the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick, because the people that dwell there are forgiven their iniquity.

MEDITATION XXXV.

FRAMES OF SOUL VARIABLE.

It is the greatest display of spiritual folly to build on a frame. A frame is a certain heavenly disposition of the soul. Now, to rest on any thing in ourselves, is to destroy ourselves; for the noblest attainment is to go wholly out of ourselves, and rest only on Christ. If I

do otherwise, I provoke him to remove, by placing the effect of his presence in the room of himself, and then my mountain, which I thought stood so firm, is immediately removed; God hides his face, and I am troubled. Heavenly frames, and glorious manifestations, I should seek, not to rest upon, but to be refreshed with. Christ may come into a frame, but I ought to beware lest I keep the frame, and let Christ go, who is to be sought for himself, found in himself, in the promise, in his unchangeable love, and not in a frame.

To have a cold, insensible heart, is a comfortless condition; but, to have Christ who always brings melting of heart, and a revival of graces with him, is good, and is a prelude of the happiness to come. When I prefer the attendants to their prince, and hug these when I should honor him, this is the way to make him withdraw his visits, and refuse to come again till I confess my folly. Hence am I chastened with so many changes in my soul; sometimes standing on Mount Pisgah, then grovelling in the valley of Achor; sometimes walking in the light of his countenance, then going mourning without the sun; sometimes admitted with boldness to his throne of grace, where he fills my mouth with arguments, then finding a cloud spread on his throne, that my prayer cannot pass through, nor I order my speech by reason of darkness; and all this to chasten my folly, and make me adore his sovereignty, who comes and goes at pleasure. Of such a place, and such a time, one may say, It was Bethel, the house of God, and a time of love; but neither the Bethel of God, nor the time of love, is to be the confidence of the soul, whatever comfort it may afford. The God of Bethel, the God of unchangeable love, is to be the strong tower to which every believer must always resort. To live by faith, is more noble and more safe than to live by sense.

Now, in these things, God teaches me to esteem him more than any thing from him; the enriching hand that gives, more than the gift that enriches; yea to depend more on his permanent promise, than on his passing presence. For, though the one should be pleasant, like the voice from the excellent glory on the mount of transfiguration, yet the other is the more sure word of prophecy, of inspiration, to which at all times we

should betake ourselves. And this we should remember, that the continuation of that ravishing frame of soul, (a gale of which sometimes the favourites of heaven feel blow through their mind,) is reserved for the happier state above: But it should occasion the extremest sorrow, if we send away our Beloved, who is willing to abide with us "till the day break and the shadows flee away." This I may learn, that it is good to hold him in the promise, whatever be the condition of my soul. O deplorable imperfection! When he is absent, despair begins to appear; when present, spiritual pride is ready to spring up. But while he in wisdom comes and goes, it keeps my soul in exercise, going forward and backward, to the right hand and to the left, in quest of him, restless till I find him. Thus the soul is prevented from sitting down on a sinful security, or falling asleep in the arms of downy delusion, perhaps to awake no more. Yea, this exercising of my soul keeps every grace active; his coming hinders me from falling into the low dungeon of despair, whence I might come up no more; and his going away prevents my climbing the slippery precipice of spiritual pride, whence I might fall and break all my bones.

I desire, both in temporals and spirituals, to make the dear prophet's triumph of faith mine! "Though the fig-tree should not blossom; though my graces should seem languid, and low; though darkness should sit down on my soul; though he should keep back the face of his throne; though my soul should forget her prosperity; though, when I pray and cry, he should shut out my prayers; though Satan should roar at me, temptations rendezvous against me, corruption rage within me, and hell gape for me; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Yet I plead that thy presence may cheer me in the wilderness; for if thy presence go not up with me, I shall never be able to go hence. But may thy spirit dwell within me, and seal me to the day of redemption. Then my joy in believing shall be turned into an ecstasy of beholding the God-man, in all his amiable perfections; then frames of soul shall be sinless, holy, and screwed to the most elevated height of rapture and delight; then I shall praise without interruption, and adore without distraction.

MEDITATION XXXVI.

THE UNCONCERNED SPECTATORS.

SORROW is the continual attendant on human life. Every day, to some poor sufferer, is darkened with distress, and yet the spectators are frequently no more concerned, than if the patient were only to set out from the city to his country-seat. Were a king coming to sit in judgment on a beloved friend, and to examine strictly his actions upon life and death, could we shake ourselves free from a thousand agitating thoughts? dislodge our breasts of anxious fears, and many a fervent wish? Now, when a person is pining on a sick-bed, or expiring on a death-bed, the King of kings seems to mount his judgment-throne, and order this arrested pannel into his tremendous presence, where the examination will be strict, and the trial issue in eternal life or death. And yet how trifling often is the discourse of the attendants! how jocular and sportive their talk! But, O! if the invisible world of spirits would flash full in their face, if but all the disembodied souls of their acquaintance would start up around them, how would they stare and be distracted! though they can now dance about the grave, and laugh amidst the glooms of death. To this invisible world their friend seems fast going, and they, in spite of all their stupidity, are fast following. When I look into the bed, and see my poor fellow-creature in that humbled state, it excites my sorrow; and when I look round the company in their apparent incredulity of a future state, it so moves my compassion, that I am at a loss whether most to pity the dying, or deplore the living.

But, my soul, be not thou an idle spectator also. Know the sentence, that all must die, reaches thee as well as others. Perhaps death has the summons in his hand already, or is filling his quiver with arrows for the decisive battle; nay, he may be placing an arrow on the bended bow, to sink the sickening shaft, into thy heart-strings.

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days;" this all the nations know; "and full of trouble;" this I daily find. "He cometh forth as a flower," frail and fading; "he fleeth also as a shadow," quickly gone, and quite

forgot. I carry death in my mortal body, which, like a fiery spark concealed within, will sooner or later lay the house to ashes.

It is but a small thing to grapple with death, to enter the lists with the king of terrors, or be inclosed in the gloom of the grave; but it is another thing to enter into a world of spirits, to launch into an unknown and endless eternity, and see God face to face. Roman fortitude may dismantle itself of clay, defy the grave and brave death; but nothing but a well-grounded faith can carry one calmly, cheerfully, and comfortably, into a fixed, a future state.

The things of life are of small account at death. What can riches do, but encumber with too much splendid care, and troublesome attendance? What can a character do, but publish his decease? What can opulence and honor do, but give a pompous funeral, and a costly tomb? What can friends do, but weep about the bed, and bewail their dying relative? But thy love, dear Lord, can enlighten my passage through death, and lead me safely to my Father's house.

MEDITATION XXXVII.

DEATH A BLESSING TO GOOD MEN.

Why so much complain of death? It is true, it is the fruit of sin, for by sin came death into the world; but it is also true, that it is the finisher of sin to the godly, for by death sin shall be cast out for ever. Sin, conveyed to us in our conception, is so interwoven with the human frame, that the tie must be dissolved betwixt the soul and body, before a full and final separation can take place between the soul and sin. Who, then, would fear the furnace that is only to consume the dross, that the gold may come forth without alloy? What candidate for heaven would be averse to lay down mortality, in order to take up immortality? to put off this corruptible, in order to put on incorruption? to have his body sown in dishonour, in order to be raised in honor and glory? and to have the soul dislodged from his body, that sin might be dislodged from his soul? Why, then, should I be displeased at such a glorious exchange? To lay

down frail flesh, feeble nature, all my lusts and passions, occasions and temptations to sin, my infirmities and imperfections, and to be clothed with perfect beauty and eternal glory, might rather transport than perplex me. Wherefore tremble at the ghastly gloom, that shall beam into a boundless noon? or startle at the dark step that shall usher me into eternal day? If my separation for a few years from my friends, issue in uninterrupted communion with God, is not the change most happy? If my distant views, and dim glances of the land afar off, and the King in his beauty, pass away, that the nearest approaches, most steady views, and brightest visions, may eternally take place, am not I a gainer to the highest degree? Then, Lord, take away the sting of death, and at thy appointed time, through faith, I shall fly into his arms, not dismayed at his cold embrace, burning with an heavenly desire to be for ever with the Lord; which is far better than all the happiness of crowns and thrones below.

MEDITATION XXXVIII.

MERCY GOING BEFORE GOD, MAKES MEETING HIM A MERCY.

1757.

God and I must meet; there is a day appointed for it; and surely the thoughts thereof would be like death, and worse, were I not assured that mercy goes before his face. Why, then, should I be afraid to meet with God, since mercy goes before his face? Mercy means no ill,—will do no harm,—displays the flag of peace,—proclaims the manifesto, that "mercy shall be built up for ever." But how shall I know that mercy goes before his face? Because truth goes hand in hand with mercy; and the veracity of truth forbids me to doubt the certainty of mercy. How must the heart of a guilty rebel rejoice to find that pardon is proclaimed by his offended Sovereign! Mercy and truth are the best means of preserving the kings of the earth, and when they exercise it, their throne is upholden by mercy; but the King of heaven, in every act of his administration, preserves mercy and truth, and in them establishes his

throne. The King of kings will never go without his royal retinue, his life-guards; mercy and truth shall form the van; justice and judgment support his throne; infinity, eternity, and immutability carry his crown; power and omnipotence bear the robe of royalty; wisdom and righteousness hold the regal sceptre; goodness and holiness unfurl the flag of majesty; graciousness, long-suffering, and patience, proclaim his sacred name; and love encircles all the flaming train. In every circumstance, then, I can be in, I have comfort; for, in his providence towards me, mercy goes before him, and it works for my good; yea, even in my afflictions, mercy goes before him, and I am chastened, that I may not be condemned with the world. Thus, mercy is the precious ointment that, in all things, at all times, and in all places, casts its pleasant scent abroad, and perfumes his conduct towards me. And whenever, or wherever I meet God, whether in the dissolving pang, or solemn appearance at his bar, I shall find him a reconciled Father, and all his bowels yearning on the son of his adoption. Neither the hour of death, therefore, nor the day of judgment, shall terrify me. "But I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever; with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever; thy faithfulness shalt thou, in the sight of all the ransomed nations, establish in the very heavens!"

MEDITATION XXXIX.

THE NECESSITY OF AFFLICTIONS.

Jan. 28, 1758.

I COMPLAIN without a cause, seeing it is good for me that I be afflicted. Whatever be food to the soul, surely affliction is physic; and if there is a necessity of the one to preserve life, there is a necessity of the other to preserve health. Can a much-esteemed flower think that it is unkindly dealt with, because the weeds that twisted with its roots are plucked away with force, such force that the flower seems to be pulled along? Just so am I displeased at severe afflictions, sent to root out some rampant lusts, or deep-rooted earthly affec-

tions, when afflictions less severe would prove ineffectual for such a noble end? Corruption is not totally removed, it is only subdued in part; but the more I am afflicted, the more it is subdued. Neither is grace perfect here; but the more grace is exercised, the more perfect it grows. The better part never suffers in affliction; for, even when it is so ponderous and crushing, that under it the outward man decays, and wastes away, yet the inner man is renewed day by day. For very shame, can I take it amiss, that my sins are mortified, my lusts subdued, my fond and foolish desires reprimanded, my afflictions purged, my eager grasp of created things loosed, and that I am, by line upon line, affliction on the back of affliction, instructed of the vanity of all sublunary things? Again, dare I be displeased, that, by various, repeated, and uncommon afflictions, and from sinful instruments too, my faith is tried, my patience and resignation proved, my love and esteem of heavenly things heightened, and all my graces improved, invigorated, furbished, to the glory of God, and advantage of my own soul?

Every new trial is like a new combat set to the valiant hero. If he comes off a conqueror, it is another trophy to all his former victories, and a fresh display of his military skill in the eyes of enemies and friends. There never was a traveller to the throne of God, but pursued his way through the thorny path of affliction; and yet there is not, this day, one person in all the august assembly of the higher house, that has the least complaint upon the hardships or afflictions that befel him by the way. Why should I, then, so much complain of the deep steps and rugged roads, the stormy days and dark nights, that distress me in my pilgrimage, seeing that, when I shall see things in the light of glory, I shall approve of all; and the storm of hail, claps of thunder, and midnight gloom, shall only add to the variety of the subjects, and multiply the stanzas of my eternal song.

While here below, the intoxicating juice of carnal pleasure breeds diseases; so that the bitter potion of affliction is absolutely necessary to dispel those infections which threaten damage to the soul. Since it is not my happiness to be free from sin below, it is my

happiness that I am not without afflictions, which are a noble antidote against sin. I have reason to bewail, bitterly to bewail, the corruption of my nature, but not the correction of my corruption. Were I punished as I deserve, instead of being washed with the soap and nitre of castigation, I would be swept away with the besom of destruction. What condemned criminal would rage at the loss of a finger, who deserved to have lost his head? So, why should I repine at a little ill, who deserve a great deal worse? Indeed, at all times, and in every case, I should not look to the hand of God, but into his heart; not barely look *upon* the providence with fear, but *into* the promise with faith; where, be the providence adverse or prosperous, to my comfort I am told, that all things work together for good to God's called and chosen ones; and if my fluctuating breast is composed amidst all my sorrows, by a firm belief of the promise, that happy moment I find the promise performed to me; and aver, with the royal sufferer, "It has been good for me that I have been afflicted."

MEDITATION XL.

SAINTS UNKNOWN, STARS UNSEEN.

Feb. 14, 1758.

As there are stars in the sparkling firmament of heaven of different magnitudes and glory, so there are saints of different stations in the church of God. Some, like stars of the first magnitude, point out the way to bliss; while others, like stars of a second, third, and fourth magnitude, sparkle with an upright walk, and heavenly conversation, and condemn a wicked world. All these glorify God, as it were, in an active manner; but there is another class of his precious ones, who glorify God only in a passive manner, compared to others. These are the secret, private and retired Christians; who, like the stars that lie concealed in the amazing voids of space, and never strike the naked eye, nor seem connected with our system, are only known to God. But as the glory of God's creating hand, though less visible to us, is as really displayed among those stars that he has stationed so sublime, as among those

which he has dropped nearer to our earth, so he is glorified by the private, as well as the public Christian; and the resignation of the one to the divine disposal may be as acceptable to God, as the more active labors of the other. How is God satisfied, so to speak, to see his creature wholly at his command; his will moulded into the will of the Most High, his desires measured by Heaven's distribution of mercies, and his ambition only to be like God. Here the whole man, with his whole concerns, is wholly devoted to God. Here rebel-thoughts are slain, and the unknown saint only waits the will of God to fall in with fully, freely, and without reserve. Such a heart God dwells in, and such a soul is his throne. Nothing pleases God better, than when all he does pleases his people. Thus the soul ripens for glory, and a sacred interesting correspondence is carried on between the heart and heaven. The man rolls himself and all his concerns over on the indisputed will of him that cannot err. Nothing can go wrong with the man, because divine wisdom orders all for him; yea, what he thinks hard in itself, if he have no sinful hand in it, he embraces and submits to, because of him that sends it. He sounds God's praise loudest, who is silent before God. While the profession of some is blazing, the love of his soul is burning. While others march heavenward in the broad day, and before the wide world, this is a walk within doors, in his own house at home. Of all things, grace grows best in retirement, and, like Jacob, when left alone, he wrestles with the angel of the covenant, for blessings to himself, his family, the church, and the whole world. He is not less circumspect that not an eye is on him, but keeps clean hands, from a clean heart; not like the painted hypocrite, that must be religious for credit's sake. He has his conversation in heaven, and his communion with the Most High. Happy is he in his life, happy at his death, for he lives with God, dies in the Lord, and goes to be for ever with the Lord.

MEDITATION XLI.

THE EXCELLENT HAPPINESS OF THE BLESSED.

Spithead, May 21, 1758.

TIME is short, and eternity is long; yet, in this short time, I must prepare for long eternity. O! what a duration is before me! but what an infatuation is within me, that I should mind the trifling things of time, and forget the interests of eternity! Truly, when I compare eternity and time, I am astonished that eternity does not swallow up time in my concerns and meditations. With what night-visions, deceptive phantasies, and delusive dreams, are we entertained here, in comparison of that divine understanding, intuitive knowledge, noon-day discoveries, vigour and activity of soul, we shall be possessed of, when we awake to immortality, from all the slumbers of a transitory life! And yet, (wo is me!) am I not more anxious to grow in earth, than to grow for heaven? Will not the fear of temporal losses at times outbalance the joy I should have in believing? While God and glory have a passing meditation in my heart, have not the vanities of the world a permanent mansion? Does not worldly sorrow take deeper root in my soul than spiritual joy? And, were my thoughts counted one by one, while vanities reap the whole harvest, sacred things have scarce the tythe! Is this, alas! the behaviour of a candidate for bliss, the practice of an expectant of glory! One thinks least on what he loves least: O mournful conclusion! that I love God least, since he is least in my thoughts! But, let me rise in my contemplation, and see the goodly hosts of the ransomed nations, dwelling in the noon-day display of his glory, possessed of pleasures free as the fountain whence they flow, and full as their unlimited desire. Their souls are replenished with the most refined satisfaction, sacred delight, and substantial joy. What an august assembly are the inhabitants of the better country! wearing crowns, holding sceptres, reigning on thrones, walking in white, exalted in their natures, their conceptions bright, their visions cloudless, their thoughts elevated, their songs transporting, their happiness confirmed, their love burning, and all their powers entranced for ever!

Seeing such, and much more, (for eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath laid up for them that love and fear him,) is the happiness of the triumphant throng, who have the substance, marrow, and kernel of bliss, no wonder to see the saints settling their affections on the things above, and longing to join the happy company.

What, then, though it be a steep ascent to the mount of God, since verdant arbours, and a blooming paradise, are on the summit of the hill. A prospect of the heavenly state might make me lie, without repining, in the dungeon of a prison, till the very moment I were brought to the palace. What though I bear my cross till the day I wear the crown? or die daily, till Christ, with whom my life is hid in God, appear, and I appear with him in glory? Should any thing below move him who has his portion above? Should the pleasures of the world, which are but painted clouds, and airy appearances, entice him, or the troubles of the world terrify him, who is in a little to take his eternal farewell of both? Let adversities keep close at his heels, heaven has an open door for him, into which, while they must stand without, he shall enter, and remember his misery no more. Hence let it be my daily study to walk in the view of a world to come, till that happy day when, (O wondrous word!) I shall enter into the joy of my Lord.

MEDITATION XLII.

ONLY A RUMOUR HEARD OF THE TRIUMPHANT STATE.

Spithead, May 22, 1758.

This thought is now come into my mind, that the triumphant state of glory is but little understood, even after all the divine descriptions given thereof in sacred revelation. Not that God cannot tell, but man cannot hear; for when Paul was caught up to the third heaven, and had his ear opened to hear the Hosannas of the higher house, he says, he heard ineffable things, which it was not fit, proper, or becoming for a man to reveal, because the language of eternity cannot be adapted to

the dialect of time. After all the pleasing and glorious metaphors used to represent eternal felicity, still there is a deficiency, though neither from the fulness of that felicity, nor the divine Relater, but from us who hear. Were the definition too refined, the relation too sublime, we should not be able to comprehend it. Therefore, things that make up the excellences of this lower world, on which men fix their esteem, place their delight, and settle their affections, are chosen to adumbrate it. Hence it is called a kingdom, for there the King Eternal keeps his court; there majesty and honour, glory and renown, are before his face; there are vast dominion, noble privileges, sweet society, and mutual connexions. But as a kingdom is subject to anxiety and change, therefore it is called a crown of life, a crown of glory, that fadeth not away; an eternal day, where saints shine as suns; a royal palace, where there is unceasing harmony, and divine delight; an inheritance in light, and an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And as paradise, or the garden of God, was the sum of created perfection, whence the first Adam was driven, so the heavenly state is called paradise, being the place where the brightest display of uncreated glory is given, and whither the second Adam, Lord of all, as a public person has entered. Gems, pearls, and precious stones, which men wear on their hands and heads, are but the metaphors of their streets and walls, which are far more excellent than those things that shadow them out. What, then, must be the liberty, the privileges, the happiness of the inhabitants! But as death destroys all possessions, and darkens the brightest day, therefore this is a state of the most permanent bliss, immortal life, eternal vigour, and perpetual bloom. But as to live alone is not consistent with complete happiness, or congruous to the human soul, that is not made to be alone; so in the better country there is an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly and church of the first-born, and God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right-hand are pleasures for evermore. Rivers of living water, and the tree of life bending with fruits of paradise, set out the sufficiency, satisfaction, and redundancy of spiritual refreshment and delight that abound there.

But still there is something in the blessed state above which supplies the soul with the fullest tides of serenest rapture, ecstasy, and joy, of which all these descriptions of felicity come infinitely short; and that is, vision, and fruition of the Lamb, participation of the divine nature, living in and with God, and communion with Jehovah, screwed up to the highest pitch of divine intimacy, carried on through eternity in an uninterrupted out-going of the soul towards her supreme and chief good, and receiving the divine emanations of all his adorable perfections, breathed by the Holy Ghost into all the panting, enlarging affections, and powers of the sanctified soul! But what this is, who can tell? How shall finite and infinite meet? Will God in very deed dwell with man and in man? Shall man in very deed dwell in and with God? Shall a finite spirit have communion with the Father of spirits? Oh! what remains to be revealed in that exalted state, which has not yet entered into the heart of man! Prepare my soul, prepare for that felicity to come, which is sufficient to satisfy with transport and delight ten thousand heavens of seraphim, much more my shallow mind.

MEDITATION XLIII.

PHILOSOPHY.

Spithead, May 27, 1758.

Truly philosophy is a study much commended, and deserves it in its various branches. Where the works of nature are narrowly surveyed, they fill the mind with wonder and delight, and prove that their Creator must be God.

O! says one, how the study of astronomy exalts the soul! And then he expatiates on the starry heavens, or firmament of suns, with their dependent planets, or worlds unseen, and carries on his fruitful theme, till his lectures have filled the extension of space with spacious habitations for intelligent, though unintelligible beings. But, to leave the philosopher to his own conceits, true or false, there is a study which as far excels it, as it excels the ignorance of the illiterate rustic; and rises infinitely higher in the object of its wonder, and

subjects of its inquiry; and this is, the sacred study of religion, which is the wisdom that as far excelleth, not only folly, but philosopy, as light excelleth darkness. The philosopher's themes are high in comparison of him who is only amused with mean, low, sordid, and selfish things, (and if not our highest themes, they are allowable;) but how low and grovelling, in comparison of divine perfections, which entrance the meditant, and transform the student. The philosopher, not content with the earth to circumscribe his studies, grasps at the extended heavens; but the Christian, content with neither, seeks after him whose throne is higher than the heavens; "Whom or what have I on earth but thee? whom or what have I in heaven but thee alone, O Lord?"

Philosophy describes created light; but religion leads us to the Father of more excellent lights, and super-eminent glories. Astronomy struggles with the laws of the stars, disclosing to us the wonders of the sky; but divinity brings us beyond them, to him who counts their number, calls them by their names, and holds them in his hand. This explains the labour of his hand, that explores the love of his heart. The one leads us to see the palace, the other to behold him who dwells in the heaven of heavens, in eternity unknown. Let the philosopher dwell all his days upon the solar beam, its vivifying and fructifying influences, its quick transition to our earth, its curious intermixture of colours, while nothing is discernible but light; I say, though he should spend all his time on these studies, yet it shall never alter his countenance, or give a visible external lustre thereto; but Moses, when only forty days in the mount with God, receives such a stamp of divinity on his soul, and such a tinge of the celestial beauty on his countenance, that the skin of his face did shine. Nor was this Moses' privilege alone, but is the privilege of every saint in every age: "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." An holy life, or communion with God, not only changes their appearances, but the place of their abode; for though the earthly philosopher remains still below, yet the spiritual philosopher translates

his seat above, dwells on high, has his conversation in heaven; yea dwells in love, and therefore dwells in God, for God is love.

Thus the pious soul who dwells alone, and is not reckoned among the sensible or polite part of the people, may improve to a miracle in divine knowledge, while the most penetrating philosopher, unless skilled in this, must leave his studies in the midst, that have amused the more knowing part of mankind, and at his end shall be a fool.—While others increase in knowledge, may I increase in love. And while they arrange the stars into their several houses, may I be taken up about the bright, the morning Star. Let them describe the heavens, and all their signs; I will, with the boldness of faith, draw near to him, who spreadeth them as a curtain, and stretcheth them out as a tent to dwell in. While they see a thousand beauties in the sky, "which is strong, and as a molten looking-glass," I will fix the eye of my soul on a more glorious looking-glass, the face of Jesus, and there see brighter displays of much diviner glory. Let the sun be the subject of their theme, as well as the centre of their system; but I will adore the Sun of Righteousness, whose beams outshine created lights, and illuminate benighted souls, though the bright lamp of day could never pierce the eyes of one born blind. Choose you the worlds unknown for your studies, I will choose the world to come for my meditation.

O how is sacred love to be aspired after! As it is the fulfilling of the whole law, so it is the attainment of all philosophy; for he that loves God most is the wisest man. O! then, ye virtuosi, while ye increase in knowledge, may I increase in love! Let every spark kindle into a flame, and the flame at last burn divinely bright through everlasting day. Your nice definitions of dark things, rack and torment you; but such studies as these improve, compose and satisfy my soul. Finally, when the end shall come, all your flourishing themes shall flash flames in your affrighted faces, or tumble down, while ye stand trembling amidst the mighty ruins; but from the subjects of religion, the dread catastrophe shall only remove the darkening vails, sweep off the dimming clouds, and let eternal things shine forth in

all their native beauty, and essential glory. Then, though here I have seen through a glass darkly, I shall see face to face; and though I have been but learning the first principles of the oracles of God, yet then shall I be admitted to the university of angels, the college of perfected and accomplished worthies, where lessons of divinity, worthy of the highest seraph, shall be our eternal study, and delightful exercise above.

Now, how excellent is practical religion, for its sublime subjects, divine virtue, and eternal duration? The subjects that this spiritual philosophy treats of, are God in his attributes, perfections, glories; his works and providences; redemption, in its contrivance, finishing, and application, by the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost; the soul, in its worth and immortality; and the other world, in its certainty and perpetuity. Again, religion is excellent, because it ennobles the human soul, clothes it with a true greatness, decks it with the beauty of eternal day, prepares it for glory and for God, pourtrays the images of heavenly things on the inward part, assimilates to the Son of God, and makes partaker of the divine nature. And, lastly, its duration is eternal: Tongues must cease, and thrones be cast down, but the subjects of religion shall remain, and be enlarged upon for ever.

MEDITATION XLIV.

A WICKED THING TO DEPART FROM GOD IN THE LEAST.

Cancalle Bay, June 19, 1758.

THE Lord is with us while we be with him, but when we forsake him, he hides his face and departs from us, that we may not depart from him any more. It is dangerous to let the soul out of the sacred set, the heavenly frame; for the inclination being carnal, the affections corrupt, the will stubborn, and the heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, it is with much ado the rebel is brought back again to his obedience. Moreover, the soul, above all things, receives a tinge and resemblance of that with which it is most conversant: hence the carnal mind holds not with its carnality, but

even turns enmity against God; while the soul that beholds the glory of the Lord, is changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

Again, the nearer the soul is allowed to approach to God, the easier it is kept with God; but the further it removes from God, the faster it flies from him; like a stone tumbling down a mountain, the velocity of which increases according to the distance it has fallen; and which at last, with amazing rapidity, rolls to the lowest bottom of the valley. So defection is made by degrees. First our love cools; then our delight in God and in religious duties languishes; then our watch against sins and short-comings is slackened; then we count the service of God a weariness; then our mortification of lusts is superseded; then the performance of religious exercises proves a burden; then our affections grow carnal, and our meditations vain; then sins appear, and we view them, first, with no great degree of abhorrence, secondly, with a friendly eye; then we dally with them, and then turn openly and avowedly profane. This has been the case with some once shining professors. But when the saints have gone back from God, though mercy will not let them fall finally and totally away, yet what rueful thoughts, what despairing groans, what melting complaints, what terrors of conscience for a time, what penitential sorrow and breaking of heart, what dreary backlooks on their backslidings, what anguish, remorse, and pain, what inward vexation, and trouble of mind, to think how they have sinned against God, thought little of his love, forgot his goodness, and buried his mercies in oblivion, have chastised their mournful departure from God! till their heart is swept, by the Spirit of grace and consolation, of all these terrible storms, and filled with joy and peace in renewed acts of believing.

But, again, as the soul leaves God in sin, so God, may leave the soul in justice, and measure its way into its bosom. He may punish sin with sin; our going away from him, with his going away from us, and permitting us to go further away from him. He may justly deprive us of the mercy which we prize not as we ought. When we will not hear him, though he stands at the door and knocks, yea, puts in his finger by the

hole of the door, he may not hear when we pray before the throne. We think little of that unspeakable privilege of being allowed to walk with God, but it is a mournful thing to walk without him, if once we know what it is to walk with him. We should watch our ways, guard against the beginning of our wanderings, the first straying of our thoughts from God. For by sad experience I may say, that the heart that fixes not on God, is tossed to and fro, up and down, like the locust, seeking rest in many things, and finding it in none. But, Oh! that when I have flown out of the ark upon the flood of vanities, I may not, with the raven, ere I return to the sacred resting-place, sit down on dead and despicable objects, as corrupt in their kind as the carrion floating on the face of the waters, but, with the nobler dove, return to him whose arm of mercy can pull me into the ark again, and encircle my soul with his favor, and make her rest with vast delight in his unchangeable love. In thy sovereignty and love, depart not thou from me; and in thy mercy, let not me depart from thee.—Hold me by thy right-hand, and my soul shall follow hard after thee, till thou allowest thyself, (O condescendency!) to be overtaken in vision and fruition, where I shall no more fall away from thee.

MEDITATION XLV.

WHO THE GREAT MAN IS.

Cancalle Bay, June 19, 1758.

He that bears a commission from his king, that is, a peer, a privy counsellor, or a minister of state, is accounted a great man. Now, if being near the throne, and conversant with the king, makes a man great, clothes him with renown, procures him reverence and respect, loads him with popular applause, and encumbers him with splendor and pomp; with how much more divine and durable honor is the saint aggrandized, who, though alone from the world, dwells with God; and though not known among the busy crowd, resides about the throne! The high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, gives his royal assent to their petitions, and will not say them nay; yea, "his secret is with them that fear him,

and he will shew them his covenant." This is greatness indeed, to be in favor with him who is a terror to kings; with him to whom kings and their subjects are less than nothing, and vanity.

How are the humble saints exalted in their privileges above the grandees of the world! The King eternal is not only their Friend, but Father; and the Prince of the kings of the earth is not only their Benefactor, but their Brother, which relation is secured for eternity. Again, his gifts are according to his divine dignity. None of the kings of the earth can bestow on their dearest friends, and most faithful servants, crowns and kingdoms. They may indeed divide their own among them at their death, in some countries, but in no country can they secure the donation, when dead, or perpetuate the conveyance. But his favors, who lives for ever to see them bestowed, are crowns and kingdoms, a crown that fadeth not away, and a kingdom that cannot be moved. Yea, his gifts enrich the soul, and measure with their existence.

Monarchs may cause their favorites' names to be registered in the list of their privy counsellors, and other honorary rolls, but cannot prevent their being buried in oblivion; but the names of all the saints are written in the Lamb's book of life, and shall be confessed before an assembled world. It is more to know God, than to be acquainted with kings;—to be known of God, than to be commended to the ends of the earth.

Now, what thinkest thou, O poor despised saint of God! that dwellest in a cottage which the great men would not stoop to step into, to be so high in the favor of Heaven, that a divine guard of heavenly angels is set about thy house, that no ill can come near thy dwelling? Yea, the sacred retinue, though unseen, attends the saint wherever he goes, who walks unobserved through the world. Did the royal life-guards of the young princes, the rising heirs of heaven, appear in the shining livery of him who is the Father of lights, they would terrify the inhabitants of the earth; but there is a greater wonder, that even the Sovereign of eternity should condescend to be the watchman of his people, and keep their going out, and preserve their coming in, so that neither the moon by night, nor the sun by day,

shall smite them! And what comfort and security is this, that the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath the everlasting arms! Such, O saint! is thy renowned state, thine excellent glory, who perhaps art kept at short allowance of food and raiment both, with a young and needy family sitting heavy on thy mind; but God careth both for thee and them. What then, though thou hast crosses of every kind to meet with, bitter draughts of every composition to drink, since it is well with thy better part? Yea, afflictions capacitate thee for felicity, and enlarge thy soul for bliss. But I dare appeal to thine own breast, O Child of God! under all thy troubles, falsifying friends, loss of relations, or any other grief, if thou wouldst change thy calamity with the flourishing condition of the wicked?

Now thou art great, (for the saints, since they live near God, are the greatest men in the world,) and perhaps knowest it not; but, let thy greatness kindle thy gratitude, not increase thy pride. To keep the saints humble, divers afflictions are allotted them in this life; as a royal father, fearing lest his son, the young prince, under his present grandeur, and prospect of the crown, may swell beyond himself, deals so hardly with him, that oft he fears the king intends to disinherit him; yet so many bright displays of paternal affection assure him it shall not be so; and the truth is, it is out of love, that he may not mount the throne with unsubdued passions, or sway the sceptre in thoughtless folly. So it fares with the saints, who should know, in the celestial promotion, that it comes neither from the east, nor from the west, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but it is God alone that exalteth. My life, then, is a paradox; I am mean, but great; miserable, yet happy; poor, but possessing all things; a beggar, and a prince; but eternity shall unriddle it, taking away the one part, and illustrating the other.

MEDITATION XLVI.

WE SHOULD SLEEP NO LONGER THAN TO REFRESH THE BODY.

Cancalle Bay, June 20, 1758.

Long sleep in any man is blame-worthy, but in a candidate for glory it is a sin. I may indeed rise in time to

manage my temporal affairs, as I am seldom behind hand with the world; but what improvement make I for eternity? "He that loveth sleep," though in worldly things he may sustain no loss, yet in spiritual things "shall be a poor man." When I have a long journey to go, I can get up early in the morning, and take the day before me. Now, I am on a more momentous, and immensely longer journey, even to eternity, which cannot be delayed a day; therefore, I have need to take the day of time betimes, the day of health and life beforehand, ere the shadows of darkness overspread me, wherein no man can walk, or the night of death overtake me, wherein no man can work.

Alas! allowing that I shall number three-score suns, how far am I already advanced towards noon! how little of the half do I want! a year or two. The past time is lost, the future uncertain; but eternity is certain and approaching. When I look back, how many healthy hours lost in sleep, superfluous sleep, stare in my face! And now that I am convinced of the preciousness of time, shall I squander it away in sleep? *Too late at the bottle*, and *too long in bed* are sins of a deeper dye than either the tippler or sleeper will allow. What will I think, if sickness render me unfit for any thing, if infirm old age confine me to my crazy bed? How will I look back with sorrow on vigorous youthful hours lost in sleep! hours which might have been improven for eternity, and spent in communion with God. Did a friend whom I dearly love, come early in the morning to visit me, would I not rise to entertain him, not knowing how soon he might go away? Shall I then give the Beloved of my soul worse entertainment then my friend? Sleep is a kind of death; therefore, when asleep, how can I have communion with God, for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living? He, out of sovereignty, may speak to man in a dream, in a vision of the night; and sometimes the dreams of his people have been divine, so that, when they awoke, their sleep has been sweet; but the duty of saints is to seek him with all the activity of their soul, in the full exercise of all her powers; with the psalmist, to awake themselves early, that they may praise him; to prevent the dawning, that they may pray to him. How am I to

blame, that indulge long sleep! See the labourer go early to the field, the hireling to his work; and shall I lie in bed, like one that has less to do than they? Did my dearest Lord continue on a mount alone, all night in prayer to God for me, and the like of me; and shall I not praise him early? The royal Psalmist could shake himself from his midnight-slumbers, to join in the work of heaven; and shall not I rise in the morning!

Thus, indeed, I think I am punished, that the more I indulge myself in sleep, the more I would sleep. The hosts above rest not day nor night; and I should rest only to refresh my body, not to ruin my soul. Alas! I have not only long sleep to lament, but that I slumber my time away, when awake, without lifting my eye to God. Pity, in all respects, O Fountain of mercy? one that in all respects deplores himself.

MEDITATION XLVII.

OUR ONLY JOY IN VIEW OF THE WORLD TO COME.

Under sail, June 22, 1758.

VERILY, O worldlings! I pity you. Now you seem to be great, and full of glory; but though you shine without, there is an awful blank within. *If in this life only I have hope, I should of all men be most miserable*; for the greatest thing I could either hope for, or desire below, are trifling in comparison of the great and glorious things of eternity that I aspire after. What good would my life do me, did I not live to die, that I may live for ever? What would my time be, but a rotation of toils and troubles, did it not afford me an opportunity to prepare and improve for eternity? How would every forethought about this present life trouble me, did not the solid hope of a future world sustain me!

As for my part, I would not wish a worse hell, than that my habitation among the wicked in Mesech, with my unsubdued corruptions and carnal affections, were perpetuated. But I know in whom I have believed, and that he will not delay to gather his scattered sheep together, that there may be one Shepherd, and one flock, in the fields above. Eternity is already begun in my soul, and my inward part is refreshed with fore-

tastes of fruition; hence my thoughts take wing beyond the bounds of time, and dwell, (though, alas! too short,) amidst the glories of the better world. Hence I am contented with my present state, and would not change with kings; hence the early beamings of that blessed day, when my Beloved and I shall meet, to part no more, refresh and ravish all my soul; hence I triumph amidst all the transitory scenes of sorrow which I labour under, and am not moved, either by unjust reproach, or vain applause. O the emptiness of this present world! but O the excellences of the world to come! Faith and hope cut down, and fetch me some of the first-ripe fruits, some of the grapes of Eshcol. Surely, this world were a wilderness to me, did I not look on myself only as a traveller through it, as a wayfaring man that shall tarry therein but for a few nights.

There is a restlessness in my breast, that shall never be removed till I rest in God. Yea, even now, God is the resting place of my soul, otherwise I should be tormented with strong pain, and torn with agonies of mind. Yet the most pleasant calm and tranquility I enjoy here, through the imperfections of this state, and remaining corruption, is far from being complete at best, and oftentimes is interrupted; but the rest I wait for, is refreshing, perfect, and eternal.

Hasten, then, the day when thou shalt descend to mount thy glorious throne, and appear the second time without sin unto salvation; when thou shalt accomplish all my desires, fill my longing soul, admit me to the nearest communion, and satisfy me with the sublimest bliss. For this I impatient wait; and in the mean time lay up my treasures in heaven, where I dwell by hope, and have taken up my mansion by faith in the promise, till the day of my solemn removal come, when, by the divine command, I shall be carried over to the land of rest.

Miserable they who have no joy in the prospect of a world to come, without which I should be swallowed up of sorrow; who find their pleasure, and place their happiness, in the painted trifles of a momentary life, but are tortured with the thoughts of eternity, and put on the rack if they glance beyond the grave.

MEDITATION XLVIII.

ON THE SCRIPTURES.

Under sail, near Jersey, June 23, 1758.

An entertaining history, or a striking description of some famous battle, will challenge our attention, and cause us light another candle: but a small portion of the scriptures suffices us; yea, some are more taken with a well-written romance, than with all the interesting truths of the word of God. *This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.*

Ah! how am I to blame that do not more value this invaluable book, where the style is lofty, the images striking, the figures beautiful, the harmony conspicuous, the subjects of infinite moment, and the glory of God the scope of all. Here corruption and grace are pourtrayed to the life, the struggles of the old and new man set forth in an instructive light. Here are arrows that pierce the stubborn heart, and balm of comfort for the bleeding soul. Here kings are taught how to reign, and princes how to judge; and here is an unerring directory for churches in their public, and Christians in their private capacities, to walk by. This is the armoury of heaven, from which I may be furnished with weapons for my spiritual warfare; for the sword of the Spirit is the word of God. Like a kindly comforter, it stills my complaints, chases my sorrows, cheers my sinking spirit, revives my hope, strengthens my faith, and sets me above the hurricanes of time. This feeds me with manna; not the manna of the wilderness, of which all who ate are dead, but the divine manna, preserved in the golden pot of the promise, laid up in the ark of the covenant of grace, for all the chosen seed. Surely "thy words were found of me, and I did eat them, and thy word was the joy and rejoicing of my heart." This is the only food that can support the strength of the traveller heavenward. This makes my table so well furnished, and so richly spread, in presence of my foes. With this my cup overflows; and this is my daily allowance from the King's table, till the day I am admitted to sit at table with the King. "The words of thy mouth are better to me than thousands of gold and silver. I rejoice at thy word as one that finds

great spoil." Without this sacred book I should have no happiness here, no hope for futurity; for it is the Christian's charter for the glorious inheritance above. It is my directory in all conditions, at all times, in all difficulties, amidst all companies, and in all places. To be condemned to read a human composition again and again, would be intolerable; but to be debarred from reading the scriptures, would be death. They are always savoury and refreshful to the spiritual taste; as the traveller drinks at the stream that attends him thro' the desart, as often as he is parched with thirst, and finds it always refreshful. These truths, which at one time we read with a belief that they are divine, come at another time, when the Spirit breathes on them with such power, that in them we hear God talking with us, and our heart burns within us.

Here time is bounded, and eternity brought forth: the world set on flames, and the new creation formed; here heaven and earth talk together, God and man converse; here conscience is accosted, thoughts discerned, and secrets brought to light; so that it is both full of eyes, and dreadful round about.

This is the light of revelation that dispels the darkness of corrupt nature, shows me the world to come as present, sets the judgment throne, sounds the trumpet, gathers the nations, passes the sentence, and brings in eternity. Yea, from this sacred volume, I may learn on what hand I shall stand, and what my sentence shall be in that tremendous day.

May I build for myself a dwelling in the word of promise, which shall stand when the hail shall sweep away the refuges of lies. From this dear book will I choose my songs in the house of my pilgrimage; and will count myself happier with a few promises from it, than if possessed of sceptres, crowns, and kingdoms. This is the window out at which the Beloved looks; the lattice through which he shows himself, till the day break and the shadows flee away. In a word, this sacred *word* is the beauteous *day-star* that gives the pleasant dawn, till the *Sun* himself arise, and shine in the firmament of glory.

MEDITATION XLIX.

TRUE JOY.

At anchor, St. Helen's, July 4, 1758.

Sometimes, indeed, I am amazed at the joy of sinners while those who have the greatest cause of exultation are rather too sad. Yea, I wonder that, on due consideration, joy of soul bursts not my mortal frame. Though I should never think highly of myself, yet I should never think lowly or meanly of the manifestations of the love and favour of God. What shall I, then, think of this quiet of mind, this peace of God that passes understanding, pouring into my soul, and giving me the life of a prince, while one would be ready to conclude that I lived like a prisoner? What of this dwelling under the smile of Heaven? this joy that I have in believing these transforming glances of glory, which give a sweet antepast of the fruition to come, and make me long for the day of communion? What of my daily allowance from the table of the King, yea, sometimes my being allowed to eat at the King's table of the hidden manna, and bread of life, and to behold his glory with the eye of faith.

Surely, then, I ought to sing and rejoice; for as the sorrow of the world worketh death, so the joy that is spiritual tendeth to life. God remembers both the place and time where he lets out his love to his people; hence, says he to Jacob, "I am the God of Bethel;" and of Jacob to his posterity, "He found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us; even the Lord God of hosts, the Lord is his memorial." "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals." Dare I, then, despise the day of small things, or forget what God may be pleased to remember? And if I look but a little further to the end of my life, which is perhaps nearer than I think of, what a flood of glory waits to replenish my enlarged soul, when sin and imperfection shall be put off, and perfection put on? Should not such a happy change, secured to me by the faithfulness of him who cannot lie, but who rests in his love, cause a continual joy in my soul? I daily see sinners, whose life is one scene of joviality, one round of mirth, and yet they know not on what account they are so cheerful;

and why should I be sad, who have the truest cause of purest joy? Neither should the outward troubles of time disquiet me, more than a king riding in his coach of state, attended with his guards, should take it ill that dust should fly round him, or a gentle shower fall on him, when screened from both; so I am safe in the promise; yea, I ride in the chariot of my Beloved with greater security, and statelier port, than crowned heads could ever boast of.

Hasten your flight, ye envious days, that I may see him whom I love, for whom I long, on whom I have fixed my affection, and with whom my soul dwells by faith. Now will I joy in thee with a joy superior to theirs that divide the spoil; and wait for the day when I shall be allowed to bring to the throne of thy glory, the tribute of praise for all thy mercies to me, and among the rest for this true substantial joy.

MEDITATION L.

ONE FRUIT OF AFFLICTION.

Spithead, July 14, 1758.

THE world complains of affliction as the worst thing that can befal a man, but for my part I never shall. Were it as bad as we apprehend, how is it that from Adam to this very day, the saints have had so large a share of it? Now, among the many precious fruits of affliction, I shall only name one, and that is, earnestness and importunity with God in prayer. A gracious soul may walk with God in close communion, as Enoch, captivated with the glory of his countenance, and lifted above the world by the outlettings of his love; but as this is not the ordinary attainment of the saints in general, it is their mercy to be driven near the throne, and made earnest in their prayers. A good man *may* walk in the course of religious duties, but affliction gives edge to his devotions, importunity to his petitions, makes him draw nearer to the throne, stay longer, and cry louder.

Of this we have examples in the practice of scripture-saints. See how Lot, when Sodom is in flames behind him; his wailing wife and weeping daughters

hanging round him; desolate mountains before him, whither he is commanded to escape; terror without, and trembling within: see, I say, how he doubles his request, "It is a little one, O let me escape hither! is it not a litle one?" See another example in the case of Jacob, who was not long escaped out of Laban's hand, till he is informed of another and more furious foe come out against him to cut him wholly off. Immediately he pleads the promise which God had made to him, of doing him good, and also bidding him return unto his native land, yet confessing he was less than the least of all his mercies: Then he makes the most prudent disposition for melancholy consequences that he can think on, and sets them all over the brook; but he lodges alone that night, and when alone expresses all his grief, pours out his soul to God: 'Didst not thou promise that in my seed all nations should be blessed, and from my loins the promised Messiah spring? and that my seed should be numerous as the stars, innumerable as the sand? But where is the accomplishment of the promise, the veracity of the promiser, if I and all my seed are slain?' This, no doubt, was the subject of his prayer, and the theme he insisted on in the wrestling-night; and, lo! the very saviour, about whose kingdom in the world he was so concerned, appears to him in the very same likeness which he should afterwards assume, and allows himself to be wrestled with, in weeping, prayers and supplication, and to be over come by the all-prevalent strugglings of omnipotent faith, till this surprising language drops between them, "Let me go," "I will not let thee go except thou bless me;" which was granted, and confirmed by a change of his name from Jacob to Israel. Sure, then, never was a sweeter night on earth; and can it be doubted but that was a singular fruit of a singular affliction! Here we must also admire the earnestness of Moses in prayer with God, in the time of Israel's calamity, through sin: "And now, O Lord, let the power of my Lord be great; pardon, I beseech thee, the sin of this people"—Of Joshua, when Israel was smitten before their enemies: "What wilt thou do to thy great name?"—Of David, under his various persecutions—and of Hezekiah, when he received the railing letter from the Assyrian monarch.

Not to mention any more in the Old Testament, I shall name one in the new: Peter is apprehended by Herod, put in prison, and the day set that he should suffer; this was a great affliction to the church, one of her prime pillars, one of her apostles, so near a shameful cruel death; but prayer is made of the church unto God without ceasing, and the issue is Peter's deliverance in a miraculous manner. O! how, when pressed upon by affliction, do we press upon the promise, plead for the performance, and are importunate with God! As an affectionate parent keeps back from his child what he knows to be needful for him, that he may be delighted with its little pretty arguments to obtain it, so deals God with his people.

Then, rather than that I should grow remiss in my supplications at the throne of grace, through the languor of my love, may the weight of my afflictions add fervour to my devotions, and eagerness to my requests.

MEDITATION LI.

FROM THE DEPTHS OF AFFLICTIONS WE SEE STUPENDOUS THINGS.

Spithead, July 17, 1758.

Will any man think the philosopher mad for going into a profound pit, that there he may see to more advantage the furniture of the higher heavens, the glory of the sparkling stars? Seeing that meaner objects being hindered to strike his eye, nothing but what is high, luminous, and bright, beam into the bottom of the dark abode. Even so the saints, when shut up in the deeps of afflictions, "when set in dark places as the dead, when hedged about that they cannot get out," have their eyes on God alone, who can bring them out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay. Then their thoughts ascend to heaven, and heaven shines down into their souls; while the world, in all its glittering vanities that strike the carnal eye, is cut off on every side. A communication is opened between God and the soul: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit," a spirit broken with affliction; yea, with such he will dwell, to revive the hearts of the contrite ones.

Again, in the dark night of adversity, there are beauties seen, that were never seen in the broad day of prosperity. Manasseh, all the time he reigned in Judah though it was a land of light, never knew God till he was taken among the thorns, bound in fetters, and carried to Babylon, where he prayed, was heard, pardoned, and liberated; and "then Manasseh knew that the Lord, he was God." Thus, in the depths of affliction, he learned maxims more sublime, and of higher moment, than he could attain to when seated on a throne. O desirable distress! that discloses and magnifies heavenly excellences, and diminishes earthly vanities!

When much of the world gets into the mind, then little of God is there; for "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;" but when little of the world, then much of God. Affliction is also a time of solitude, for the man sitteth alone; but God setteth the solitary in a family, even in the family of heaven, and comforts him with his own children. In no place better than in the profound depth of affliction, does the heir of future glory see the love, the goodness, the mercy, and the wisdom of God; the excellency of religion, the beauty of divine things, the danger of prosperity, the deceitfulness of riches, the vanity of created things, and the happiness of the world to come.

But as to the illiterate man who knows nothing of astronomy, or the laws of the celestial bodies, this pit would be a deplorable situation, for it is only the philosopher that can improve here; so it is only the spiritual mind, the heavenly meditant, that reaps the advantage of such a situation, for the carnal man here would be altogether miserable.

Again, as no man would pity the philosopher for being deprived awhile of beauteous day, while pursuing his studies, and perfecting his knowledge; so why should the saints be accounted cast off, when plunged into affliction for a while, to pursue their studies of the wondrous way of Providence, and perfect their knowledge of the Most High?

MEDITATION LII.

PRAYER.

Spithead, July 28, 1758.

No sooner is the child born, than he breathes; no sooner is Paul converted, than, behold! he prays.

O incomparable privilege! to be allowed to pour our complaints into the ear of God, cast our cares over on him, plead the performance of the promise, and devolve the burden of our sorrows and necessities over on his sympathy and all-sufficiency! The prayer of faith has won more numerous and more noble victories than all the mighty conquerors since war was taught among the nations. Prayer is the furbishing of all the other pieces of the spiritual armor, and as it were the muster-master of all the graces. It is the key of heaven; Elijah prayed, and it was locked; again he prayed, and it was opened. It is the terror of hell, which will put up with any thing but prayer;—the ambassador of the renewed soul,—the trumpet of faith,—the support of the weak,—the employ of the expectant of glory,—and the daily exercise of the Christian. It is like a pulley that draws the soul up to heaven; and, like a golden pipe, plunges into that river that proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and conveys the blessing down into the soul below. When Job prayed, God turned his captivity; when Jacob wrestled in prayer, he obtained the blessing; when Elijah and Solomon prayed, the fire fell and consumed the sacrifice; when Paul and Barnabas prayed and sang praises, the prison was shaken, the doors opened, and every one's bands loosed; and while the church prayed for Peter, an angel set him at liberty. By all which it appears, that God will be inquired after by prayer, and will work wonders for the humble supplicants.

This is the time that God will talk with men in a special manner;—the audience-hour of the great King, when the court of Heaven receives and answers the petitions of the saints. And many times have the souls of God's people been enlarged beyond measure, while they have, Jacob-like, been wrestling for the blessing, weeping and making supplication to God. Then Heaven has been pleased to pour in his joys in the soul, so

fully, that they hardly could contain; their old bottles being like to burst asunder with the new wine of God.

Flowery expressions, and a fine style; a multitude of words, and many petitions; or any thing that may seem the wisdom of man more than the power of God,—is not the prayer that shall be heard by Him, who regards one earnest wish, and sincere request, before all the oratory of the schools. We should search ourselves before prayer, and know what sin is least subdued, what duty is most neglected, what grace is most decayed, that we may pray with understanding. Again, we should summon our attention in the time of prayer, that we may speak as to God; and we should look to God after prayer for an answer, and wait on him who is both able and willing to supply all our need, spiritual or temporal, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

MEDITATION LIII.

LITTLE KNOWN OF THE BLISS ABOVE.

Off Cherbourg, Aug. 11, 1758.

I VERILY believe the saints here are like a stranger come from the skirts of the kingdom to the chief city, who never saw any thing grand or noble all his life till he came thither. When he comes to the palace of the king, he is astonished to see the stately buildings, royal guards, grand attendance, delightful walks, fragrant arbors, the palace-garden, and the noble personages that are admitted in. While gazing with wonder at the external appearance, he is filled with surprize to think what must be within: Rooms hung with arras, furniture gilt with gold, the throne, the crown, the sceptre, and the robes of state, and all the royal inhabitants. Even so the saints, who are charmed with the beauties of the church below, which is the house of the living God, wonder what the palace of the great King must be. For if the ordinances of his grace be pleasant beyond comparison, what must the eternal overflowings of his love be in the land of his glory? If the exceeding great and precious promises, and the scriptures of truth, be better than thousands of gold and silver, what must the fulfilment of the one, and the subject of the other, be

in the world above? How may we, when we see the outwalks of our God, the goings of our King in the sanctuary, wonder what the chamber of presence must be above!

Happy, ye that stand before him, and see him on his throne, even face to face, not as we do, who only get a window-glimpse, and through the dimming glass. What must the invisible glory of the highest heaven be, when such beauty beams in the created firmament! What must that glory be that supplies the absence of the sun! What must that beatific vision be which changes the soul at its first entrance into it! What must those pleasures be that ravish every moment! and those delights which surfeit not, even while eternally enjoyed!

Surely that divine bliss is too sublime for nature's light to know about, or see into; and revelation can tell but a little of it, because of our carnality, and shallow knowledge of sacred things. Yea, should the happiness of the blessed be described in the language used before the throne, it would be too sublime to enter into a mortal ear. So that it still holds true, that ear hath not heard, eye hath not seen, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath laid up for his saints. But such a portion is it, that the very faith of it makes them endure hardships, patient under trouble, silent in affliction, joyful in tribulation; to trample on worldly greatness, riches, honour, and renown, and to endure all things, as seeing him who is invisible, and thus to wait for his Son from heaven.

MEDITATION LIV.

THE DIVINE LOVER.

In harbour, Nov. 1, 1758.

How many great geniuses have employed their noble talents on subjects of human love! And by their flowery expressions, screw up the imaginary bliss in these luscious scenes to such a height, as if nothing more sublime could be pursued by immortal souls! And how easy such trifling subjects gain on carnal minds, mournful experience may convince us. But where is he that dwells on the Divine Lover, and expatiates on his

matchless grace, with strokes that melt the soul into astonishment and rapture? How often does the poet, in his encomium of a created fair, step beyond the truth, talk at random, yea, rove above possibility itself! But here, in the love of the Son of God, we can never exceed. It is higher than heaven, and brought him down from his Father's bosom to our earth: It is deeper than hell, and brought us up from thence: It is larger than the sea, and can never be exhausted: Broader than the earth, and can never be described. How vehemently did the heavenly flame burn, even "when the sorrows of death compassed him about, when the pains of hell took hold on him!"

How has art and oratory embellished human loves! What surprising narratives have been written of the amours of princes! and what pages have been filled with the fictitious adventures of lovers! But what has been said to purpose of the Supreme Lover, who loved his own to the end, in the hour of death, in the pangs of dissolution, and amidst the keenest sense of his Almighty Father's wrath! This is what no mortal ever could do; for death flings another theme into their mind, and as their breath expires, their thoughts perish. Death is the person loving or beloved, finishes the strongest affection, though their memory may be dear; but death cannot separate from his sacred love.

There never was such disproportion between parties loving and beloved, as here; no, not though kings should choose their queens from the dunghill. Here the Prince of peace, the King of kings, the flower of paradise, the darling of his Father's love, the express image of his person, and brightness of his glory, the heir of all things, the eternal God, loves an ugly, deformed, miserable creature, a crawling worm, a condemned criminal, an insolvent debtor, a rebel against heaven, a daring sinner, a drudge to hell, a slave to lust, a captive of Satan, a prisoner of the pit! This is love indeed, love that will be the wonder of angels, and the song of the church of the first born through endless ages.

For shame, ye celebrated bards! will ye choose such lifeless, tasteless, dying themes, and neglect the work of angels, the employment of heaven? How ardently,

O Divine lover! should my soul go out after thee! Longing for that thrice-welcome day, when I shall mourn thine absence no more, but, admitted into thy presence, shall talk of all thy love, and feast on all thy charms, world without end.

MEDITATION LV.

ETERNITY.

Spithead, Nov. 13, 1758.

ARITHMETICIANS have been much puzzled with given numbers; but none ever attempted eternity, or the duration of the world to come, though they have shown mighty art in figures. Here the finite mind has no idea of eternity but by succession of ages, and yet succession belongs to time, not to eternity. Though all the angels in heaven, and all the men in the world, since their creation, had been employed in dotting down figures, which at the end of the world were arranged into one straight line, stretching through an unmeasured space, which would give every figure ten times its force, yet this line would not be so much to eternity, by all the disproportion of comparison, as the number one bears to it; for *one* bears some proportion to the greatest numbers, but the greatest numbers bear none to eternity.

Days, weeks, and months, are nothing there; years, ages, and generations are lost there; hundreds, thousands, and millions are no more there; times, æras, and determinate durations are past for ever there; all is fixed, all eternal there! There is no first and last, sooner and later, in eternity; for though Abel, with respect to time, was sooner plunged into perpetuity, yet no sooner than the saints that shall be alive at the last day, with respect to eternity. For it is like a circle, which, desected any where, is always in the middle. The saints are like so many guests assembling to a feast, some are set down, some sitting down, some standing ready to sit down, some entering the door, and some at a little distance from the house, yet all come in due time for the feast. Adam, Enoch, and Elias, are set down at the banquet of love; the prophets and apostles are set down at the marriage supper of the Lamb;

some are entering the door of bliss, and many are on their way thither; but they shall all come time enough to the divine entertainment which shall satisfy all the guests in the mansions of glory.

Alas! with what desperate madness am I chargeable, that am thus taken up with transitory trifles, and neglect the realities of the everlasting world! When I consider the vanity of earthly glory, I cannot help concluding, that such as pursue after it are intoxicated with poison more dangerous than that of the tarantula, which makes men die by dancing; as the one effects the soul, the other only the body. But though the pleasures of this world were real and solid, yet they are so transient, that they are not worthy our pursuit. O how wise for time, but how improvident for eternity! for what man, to appear in all the majesty and grandeur of a king for one day, would forfeit his estate, and spend the rest of his miserable life in poverty and reproach? And yet for vanity, for trifles of a day, we throw ourselves away for eternity! I look forward a few years, perhaps a few days, and see myself in eternity: but I cannot look still more forward, and see myself out of eternity into another state. O eternity! I am to be in thee forever; and why shouldst thou not be in all my thoughts? Thou shalt shortly overtake me; why then should I chase thee from me, or fly myself from thee?

It matters not much to him who is going but out of one door into another, whether it be in a summer-blink, or winter-blast, since a few steps finish his journey; nor does it much more concern him who comes out of the door of the womb, and enters by the gate of death into the palace of the great King, his mansion for eternity, whether it be under the sun-shine of prosperity, or the bitter blast of adversity; because the one cannot profit him, nor the other pain him there. And our journey, from our coming into this world, till our going into the world of spirits, though we should reach the age of Methuselah, is performed sooner with respect to eternity, than our going from one room to another in respect of time. Now, my moments are numbered, and precious; but, O that blessed state when numbers are no more! No incursions there on the ador-

ing soul, from the world, or from vanity, from sin, Satan, or the flesh. No weariness there, where mine adorations shall not be measured by minutes, cramped by corruption, or cut short by bodily indisposition. But when I have stood an ardent adorer before the throne ten thousand years, I shall be as vigorous in my love, as active in my adorations, as in the first moment I began the work of angels, the employment of heaven. Now vain thoughts mingle with my contemplations, distractions with my devotions, impertinent rovings with my most importunate prayers; unbelief resists my faith, carnality is a clog to the heavenly mind, corruption a dead weight on the soul, and the things of time an hindrance to all. But then I shall be delivered into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Once a great king made a great feast to his grandees for an hundred and fourscore days; nothing less than a royal treasury could support the expence of such an entertainment. But the King of kings shall feast and satiate all his mighty angels, all his chosen people, on his own undiminished fulness through eternity itself! There is bliss without a blank, abundance beyond all bounds, and possession without period! No matter, then, what years I lose; for whenever the lamp of life expires, the sun shall rise and shine for ever.

MEDITATION LVI.

ON LOVING GOD.

Spithead, Nov. 20, 1758.

To love thee, is my honour; that I may, is my privilege; and in as far as I do it, so far am I happy. How is it, then, that this divine duty of loving thee meets with so much opposition? Hell and earth bid me hate thee; sinners will not let me avow my love to thee; corruption within, cares and concerns without, check my love; unbelief cools my love, "for faith works by love," and love bears proportion to faith; immoderate fear, and love of any thing besides thee, is a clog to my love; and imperfect apprehensions of thy glorious self, deaden my love to thee. In what a melancholy case am I! It is death to live, and not to love; yet I live, and can-

not love thee! I can love my friend, and hate mine enemy; but I cannot love my God, nor hate mine enmity. I can love what I think beautiful in the creature with love more than meet; why then not love the Rose of heaven, the chiefest among ten thousand, who is altogether lovely, and whose love is, like himself, unchangeable! What makes the triumphant state so glorious, so desirable, but because love is perfect without fear, their adorations without distractions, their conceptions bright without misapprehensions, and their praise without interruption, their knowledge clear without confusion, their vision perfect, their view fixed, and all their souls strengthened in God, replenished with God, and going out on God. Then, in loving thee, I might begin the felicity of eternity, and anticipate the bliss above. I will love thee for thyself, and thy saints for thy sake, for thy image shining in them. I will hate mine enmity against thee, grieve that I cannot love thee, and feel after thee, and wait for that day when I shall love thee as I would, because I shall see and enjoy thee as thou art.

MEDITATION LVII.

WRATH.

Spithead, Nov 21, 1758.

I HAVE hitherto had faint views of divine wrath, though I have indeed had frightful apprehensions of fire, a gloomy idea of the bottomless pit, and shocking thoughts of the state of the damned. But, there is one expression of our Saviour's, which gives me a clearer view of divine vengeance, than all the anguish of the damned can do. Observe the God-man, in whose mouth no guile was found, in whose face no personal guilt could stare, when suffering in our stead, carrying our sorrows, and bearing our grief. Although he knew he should triumph, and come off victorious, that he should see of the travail of his own soul, and be satisfied; and that, though he laid down his life, he should take it up again; yet see, when the flood-gates of divine vengeance are opening, (the overflowings of whose waters were to thy very soul, O immanuel!) and pouring out

on him, how his soul, that is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, suffers in such a manner, that the blood, instead of keeping its wonted course, and flowing to support his heart as if the frame of his holy human nature had been dissolving, breaks through the returning veins, forces a passage at every pore, and in great drops trickles down upon the ground! while he puts up a petition which I should never forget, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" Which is as if he had said, "Couldst thou be glorified, justice satisfied, and the elect saved, any other way than by my drinking this tremendous cup, O let it be done! yet not my will, but thine be done.' Now, if thus the Son of God in our nature expressed himself under a sense of wrath, how dreadful, terrible, and intolerable must it be! What are streams of melted brimstone, floods of fire, utter darkness, the worm that never dies, the horrid gulph, the bottomless pit, the tormenting company of fiends and devils, but as it were vehicles to convey wrath into the damned? for the wrath of the Almighty, of which the wicked must drink for ever, is something above and beyond all these! "Who knows the power of thy wrath?" "Who can stand if thou be angry?" How must guilt scream, when innocence itself cries out so! How must despair roar, when he that was heard in that he feared, expresses himself in such a manner!

Three things may remain my wonder, the compassion of the Father, the condescension of the Son, and the insensibility of the sinner. O, then, to be wise before instructed in the world of flames!

MEDITATION LVIII.

SENSIBLE COMMUNION WITH GOD SOMETIMES ENJOYED.

Under sail, Dec. 27, 1758.

THOUGH there is not a child in the family of heaven but what has real fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, yet there are happy times and pleasant moments, when a divine intercourse is carried on between the soul and God. A carnal world ridicules the idea; and no wonder, for the "natural man receiv-

eth not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness to him."

Will not the saints of God confess, that communion with him is sometimes sensibly enjoyed; and that the enjoyment of it is a little heaven, glory in the bud, and a foretaste of their future felicity? Nor is this the effect of fancy, or an heated imagination; it proceeds from a nobler cause, even the sovereign kindness of the Father of mercies. Have not the souls of his people, (Oh that I could say, mine own!) been sometimes so refreshed with more than ordinary outlettings of his love, that they have longed for the eternal uninterrupted vision and enjoyment of himself? And when heaven has opened before them to let them look in, and see the glories of the better country, how have they trampled on the pleasures, and triumphed over the troubles of a present life!

At three remarkable seasons God is pleased to hold communion with his people. First, Before affliction, to prepare them for it; as with Jacob in that memorable night when his angry brother was marching against him;—and with Paul, who was bid to be of good cheer, for as he had testified at Jerusalem, so he should at Rome. Again, in the time of affliction, to support them under it; as when Moses was mourning and going heavily under Israel's grievous idolatry, then God spake face to face with him, as a man speaketh unto his friend; and he made his goodness to pass before him: So Stephen's face, from heart-felt joy, shone like an angel's, amidst his foes, and near his death. And, thirdly, after some afflictive dispensations, and mournful providences: So the apostles, after they had been apprehended, examined, and severely threatened, are filled in an eminent manner with the Holy Ghost, while the place of their abode, as a symbol of the divine presence, is remarkably shaken.

Though all his saints are fed at his expense, yet sometimes they are allowed to sit in his presence, and feast with the King. And such a banquet makes the barren desert like the garden of God. It is only in the strength of heavenly meals, bestowed by the uncreated Angel, that I travel to the mount of God. Now, manifestations and communications do not entitle me to bliss, but are

themselves a part of my bliss; therefore I must not build upon them, but seek my standing in the righteousness of the Son of God: Even as a servant's being allowed provision will not prove him to be a son, yet the son abiding in the family of election and house of God, is always entitled to be fed, and is sometimes admitted to his Father's own table. If, then, Heaven is pleased, according to his divine sovereignty, to display his glory at times, in a more than ordinary effulgence, why should it be called enthusiasm and delusion? For my part, whoever be the sober wits, let me live and die in such delusion. But if thus the life of the least saint be like the life of an angel, in comparison of the happiest worldlings; and if the life of one saint so excel another's in walking near God, (for it is thus that in the firmament of grace one star differeth from another star in glory;) and if the life of a saint sometimes, for a few moments, in comparison of his ordinary attainments, be like the life of a seraph, what must eternal, uninterrupted, full, and free communion be, in the highest heavens, where the new bottles will be able to hold the new wine of paradise; and where the soul, capacitated in every power, shall be replenished with all the fulness of God?

Expire, ye protracted periods, and roll off, ye envious years, that I may join the adorers round the throne, and commence communion with the Highest in the holy place for the endless ages of eternity!

MEDITATION LIX.

BREVITY OF LIFE.

Plymouth, Dec. 28, 1758.

What is all this struggle in the world for? What mean I by so many attempts to be *something* in the sphere of *nothing?* This is as if foam and bubbles should contend for station on the rapid stream, which in a moment are no more. Now we are engaged and entangled in a war, and this is the time for the patriot, the politician, and the hero to appear; but how many press forward to make their appearance for the sake of being seen! as if honor could bring happiness. This I

see and condemn in others, yet am guilty of it myself, forgetting that I am but of yesterday, and to-morrow am no more. It is a shame to think so much about a few days, and so little of endless ages. Let me look to the generations past; then were patriots, politicians, and heroes, and some of them the favorites of fame; now that generation is gone, this is going; that has preceded this by one step, and this by another step shall follow that. How few of our deceased acquaintance are so much as remembered! and how soon, like them, shall we also be forgotten! Many prime servants of the crown are this day sleeping in perpetual silence, and their names possess almost the same repose in some antiquated registers, that are cleared away to make room for the present, as the present in a little shall be to make room for the future. Perhaps the names of a few, signalized by an uncommon fame, may yet tingle in our ears; but what is this to them who are fixed in their final state? Could it mitigate their misery, who have begun their everlasting howlings, that the whole world were ringing with their praises; or, could it add to their joy, who have begun their endless hallelujahs, that every tongue were employed in panegyrics to their memory; well might we be pardoned in our pursuit of fame.

How frail is our life! a pile of grass, a withered leaf, dry stubble, a flower, a breath, brittle clay, fading flesh: How swift! a weaver's shuttle, an eagle, a ship, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again: How short! a moment, a breathing.—While I bewail a departed friend, death, suddenly seizing me, translates the lamentation to another tongue that is most nearly concerned in me, who also in a little time must follow me into the silent grave, and leave the protracted elegy to be continued by their nearest relations. Thus mourning is continued, though the mourners are hurried away in a moment. Surely I need not be so anxious about a life so short, a state so uncertain, and a world so vain; where I am only a stranger, a pilgrim, a sojourner, and posting away from every thing below. Let the world, then, go with me as it will, this shall not trouble me, who am daily going through the world, and shall in a little go entirely out of the world, to return no more.

How, then, shall I spend this short life, my few winged moments, which are all numbered to me? Surely, in nothing better, than in looking out, and laying up for eternity.

MEDITATION LX.

ON THE LAST DAY OF A YEAR.

Plymouth, Dec. 31, 1758.

Time is measured, and is alike at both ends; it began with a day, and will end with a day; hence the evening and the morning were said to be the *first day*, as the general judgment is called the *last day*. Eternity is the fountain from which it sprang, and the flood into which it shall fall. The most lasting duration of time is but short, and its greatest prolongations come to a period. A given moment is scarce known till it is no more, a few of which make a minute, which we but begin to enjoy when it is also gone; thus an hour flies away, a day hastes to its end, and a year, (as this has done,) comes to its last day. As, therefore, at the end of the year trading people cast up their accounts, and regulate their books, let me ask myself, What have my talents gained these twelve months? for, whatever I may think, time itself is none of the least of talents, and another year is added to my account.

Thousands who came into the world after me, are called into eternity before me; and is not this a loud call to me to improve every moment of my time? Time is only little thought of by those who think still less of eternity; but if I look into a future world, I will see of how great moment every moment of my time is, who therein must prepare for this everlasting fixed state. O precious, mispent time, which I never can recall! Now this year is gone, and never shall return; what, then, have I done for the glory of God therein? Ah! it is passed away from me as a void, though on this side it sparkles thick with mercies, like the starry firmament. Ah! did I say a void? nay, worse; for while his love and goodness shone around me like the noonday beam, my sins rose numerous, like the atoms of the sun!

This is the last day of this year; and how would I value every moment of it, did I think it the last day of my life? Yet nothing but presumption flatters me with another thought. I should count every day my last, since some have found their last on days they as little dreaded as I do this; and at most, some day soon will be my last, when perhaps this same pernicious expectation will not be dispelled my breast. Then it is wisdom to be beforehand with death; rather to wonder that he stays away so long, than be surprised he should come so soon; rather triumphantly to expect him, than be terrified at his approach. Thus I should look on every day as my last, that when my last day comes, it may not come unlooked for, nor overtake me unprepared.

But, alas! this year has afforded me more mournful spectacles of sin than all my life beside. I have heard the divine name blasphemed; seen sin in high place; the holy Sabbath, like Job's birth-day, disjoined from the days of the year, and shut out from the number of the months; and all manner of wickedness committed thereon, drinking, sporting, singing, buying, selling every kind of merchandise thereon. O for what trifling gain will men cast away their precious souls! and how can I, unconcerned, look on sin in all its ugly shapes, and the dreadful havock it makes among immortal souls!

But may the divine providence bring me from these chilling objects, and may I through grace never forget what I have heard and seen! Here also patience, worthy of God, is conspicuous; for, when we think how much wickedness is committed all over the Christian, as well as the heathen world,—in Protestant as well as Roman-Catholic countries,—in public and private,—by great and small,—on land and sea; and again, that this rebellion against Heaven was not begun yesterday, but carried on since Adam's fall, for more than five thousand years; it is a wonder the world has not long ago been devoted to the flames. But that patience, which for continuance is amazing, shall at last give place to justice, which in the execution will be terrible. Might my life end, like this year, on a Sabbath, I could be content; but this may comfort me, that upon whatever day I may depart this life, I shall enter into heaven on an high Sabbath-day, for Sabbath is eternal there.

But while I am meditating on my fleeting time, the midnight hour strikes, and I am already in another year. Then adieu for ever, 1758. Yet let me remember, that by this adieu I look on my life as drawing to its latter end, and that I am advanced another stage nearer eternity, ignorant if a day, or a month, or a year, or two, or more, shall be bestowed on me.

MEDITATION LXI.

SAINTS HAVE THE GREATEST REASON TO REJOICE.

Plymouth, Jan. 7, 1759.

No wonder that Paul doubles his admonition to the converted Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice;" for nothing better becomes the saints than spiritual joy, though none are greater strangers to what they have so good a title, than they. The joy of the sinner and the laughter of the fool are alike, just as the crackling of thorns under a pot, nothing but a noise, and quickly gone; but it is not so with the saints, for there is more joy even in their penitential groans, more consolation in their mourning, than in all the gladness of the carnal world. What should make the children of a King sad, the sons of such a Sovereign, as HE, who is "the King eternal, invisible, immortal, dwelling in light inaccessible, and full of glory;" who alone hath immortality essentially, and in the light of whose countenance saints commence their journey here towards his more immediate presence, and shall hereafter hold on their journey towards his adorable perfections for ever.

If my hope can lay hold on thee, if my faith can fasten here, I ought certainly to be filled with more joy than I have in believing; and, from this divine relation to him who is the Lord of the whole creation, should be possessed of a joy that shall be more than match for all sublunary sorrow. Indwelling sin, prevailing temptation, and tempestuous corruption only claim perpetual sorrow, and unceasing lamentation; yet, with the great apostle, while with one breath I cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" I may in another breath say, in view of the

sure and sweet deliverance that shall come, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Does it become those to be sad, who are possessed of all things? And, O saints! "all things are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Is it seemly for those to weep, at whose conversion angels joy, and on whose account heaven and earth are in harmony? "Truth springs from earth, and righteousness looketh down from heaven." Is it like one of royal blood to bewail the loss of a pebble, when he has a crown set with diamonds, yea, a crown of glory that fadeth not away, laid up for him? Is it congruous for the expectants of celestial bliss to lament the loss of time-trifles, when the treasures of eternity are reserved for them? Is it decent in the conjugal affection of the spiritual spouse, the Lamb's wife, to be inconsolable at the death of a carnal relation, when the Husband, who is better than any, than all other relatives, is eternally alive? How mean is it in the great soul that is born from above, to look dejected because the world looks down upon him, when God beholds him with a pleasant countenance? How foolish were it for one travelling through a strange country to be disquieted because the children of every town stare at his foreign dress, or the fools laugh at him in his journey; when he is conscious that his king is acquainted with his character, approves his journey, and will honor him on his arrival home? In a word, how abject and base for the Christian to complain of the whirlwinds scattering his mole-hill of sand; when the spoils of principalities and powers, won by the divine Conqueror in that tremendous day when he gave his life away,—the mountains of prey, and treasures of eternity,—shall enrich him for evermore.

Now I reprove my sorrow, and reprehend my sadness. I will rejoice in the Rock of my salvation with acclamations and shouting; yea, sometimes I would fain emulate the cherubim in their sublimest strains, did not the sight of so much dishonour done to the divine majesty by others always, and by myself too often, make my joys recoil, and inward sorrow flow. Yet in thee will I rejoice, till the day dawn, when I shall enter into the joy of my Lord, which likewise entering into me, shall be mine everlasting strength.

MEDITATION LXII.

INDWELLING SIN.

Plymouth Sound, Jan. 14, 1759.

THERE is a mysterious wisdom in the way of God with his people, to whom he grants to know but in part, and to be renewed but in part. Were they, while here, wholly delivered from sin, and had the unclouded vision of his face, and full communion with God, there would be nothing reserved for the day of glory. It is with them, therefore, as with ancient Israel, among whom God wisely left some of the devoted nations undestroyed, even them whose land was divided by promise, to excite their faith, and stir up their endeavors to extirpate them, and to be a means of preserving them from sinning with security and impunity.

Now, God has promised to subdue all our sins, and so he does, that they shall never condemn us; but such is the corruption of nature, which is sanctified but in part, and of creatures who know but in part, that it is rare to be holy and humble, to be full of God, and empty of ourselves. Even the great apostle Paul, after he had been with God, in a special manner, and seen unutterable glories in the highest heavens, instead of having some of the heavenly host as his companions, after his kind reception at the celestial court, had a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure with the divine vision. A humbling change this! to come from heaven to combat with hell!

Our very critical situation in this world might keep us humble. Corrupt nature, like weeds among flowers, is ready to spring up with every refreshing *shower* of grace, and *sun-blink* of manifestation, if not into acts of sin, yet into pride, self-conceit, and security. When we see things above us, we are ready, through the mists of remaining corruption, to forget ourselves, and provoke God to show ourselves unto ourselves, that we may not be puffed up with ourselves. For to the high and lofty One, who delights to dwell with the humble, nothing is more abominable than pride, and no pride more odious to him than spiritual pride. The soldier that is not match for his enemies will always

keep in the camp, and under protection of his general; so the believer must dwell by faith, if he would be secure, under the shadow of the Almighty.

But it is impossible for us to be delivered wholly from indwelling sin in this world. For,

1. This would be turning earth into heaven, grace into glory, and time into eternity, before the great day of revelation. We must not be crowned with victory till we come off the field of battle; and this we cannot leave till our enemies are subdued before us, or we taken hence in triumph from them. We are still in the dominions of him who is the god of this world, in the territories of the prince of the power of the air; and he will always be seeking whom he may devour, till the God of peace bruise Satan under our feet, till the old serpent be bound for eternity, and cast into the burning lake.

2. Were there no indwelling sin, no remains of corruption in the justified, sanctification could not be progressive. But here "the path of the just is like the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

3. Were saints from the first moment of their conversion set at liberty from all sin, where were the divine victories of all-triumphant grace, by which God is glorified, and the saints prepared for the better inheritance? Had not an enemy, and a giant too, defiled the armies of Israel, the power and goodness of God could not have been displayed, as it was in killing him; so the divinity of grace, in babes of the heavenly family, shines in this, that they are enabled to resist temptations from the same deceiving serpent that beguiled our first parents in the state of innocence;—that they are enabled to wrestle, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places.

4. Were the case so with the saints, the book of life were in effect laid open in the eyes of men, who would anticipate the judgment which belongs to God alone. But indwelling sin, though subdued, is not slain, and therefore breaks out in such a manner, even sometimes in eminent saints, as gives the enemy occasion to re-

proach, and also makes them doubt of their own state themselves, till God deal again with them after his loving-kindness and tender mercies. Now, in the eyes of the poor penitent, a compassionate, returning, and forgiving God, is dear, beloved, and amiable beyond expression, and divine things shine with an additional lustre. Thus, even indwelling sin, contrary to its own nature, advances the glory of God, and the good of the soul

5. Indwelling sin, or the remains of corruption in the greatest saints, makes them sympathize with others. They are men, and not angels; so that they are to remember, not only them that suffer affliction, but them that are overtaken with a fault, as being yet in the body. Yea, what comfort would it be to poor sinners, if salvation were preached to them by any other than men of like natures, like infirmities, and like passions with themselves? How is our consolation heightened to hear them speak from experience, as Paul: "When I would do good, evil is present with me; so the good that I would, I do not; and the evil that I would not, that do I;" in comparison of angelic harangues on the beauty and excellency of perfection and innocence!

6. Indwelling sin keeps us humble and watchful;—makes us cleave more closely to Christ, and endeavour to make our calling and election sure;—excites us to work while the day lasts, before the night shall come, wherein no man can work

7. It makes us go entirely out of ourselves into Christ, and ascribe the whole of our salvation to free grace.

8. Thereby we learn the goodness of God in making his grace sufficient for us, and his strength perfect in weakness. Also, we are filled with wonder at the riches of his grace, which is glorified to the highest in such patience towards offending sons, and his repeated pardons of their daily sins.

Lastly, It makes, at least should make, us long much for that day when sin shall cease, and imperfection be swallowed up of permanent likeness to the divine image;—when all our failings shall pass away, while we are lost in the overflowings of divine glory, and replenished with all the fulness of God, fixed in a state from which we cannot fall, and satiated with joys that cannot surfeit.

MEDITATION LXIII.

EVENTS OF PROVIDENCE.

Dec. 1759.

UNBELIEF is my worst enemy, and most disturbs my mental quiet; and no wonder it so harrass me, when it attacks the very faithfulness of God, and concludes so harshly of his unerring providence. Now, my gratitude cannot be silent at this thy so surprising, surpassing kindness. A few months ago, matters wore a different aspect,* but I deserved worse; yet then hope would not give up its claim to thy care, faith would not quit with its interest in thy promise, in thy love, and both are satisfied with thy goodness. Thou hast bestowed the very same mercy, though in another way than I sought it.† Then I thought no way like mine, but now I find no way like thine; for as thy thoughts are higher than curs, so is thy way better than our way. This favour which I sought from thee with submission, let it come with thy blessing; not signifying thy displeasure, but sealing thy love; not only filling somewhat my cup, but fulfilling thy promise. And as it may moderately feed my condition, so let it feast my spiritual part; and not prove like Israel's flesh, that while they thought to satisfy their lust, suffocated them outright; nor like their granted request, which was attended with leanness sent into their soul.

In the common affairs of life, I cannot look *into* myself, or sacrifice to my own drag; I cannot look *about* to praise princes, or the sons men; but I must look *up*, and adore thee as only and alone in all. Dare I henceforth sin, who am so many ways hedged about from it? Shall not thy holiness dissuade me from sinning, thy power persuade, thy majesty deter, thy mercy overcome, thy love allure, and thy kindness bend me to obedience? How shall I praise thee, O thou hearer of prayers, and answerer of petitions! Let my lips praise thee; let my life praise thee; my meditations praise thee; yea, let all my actions praise thee.

* See Meditation XI.

† He obtained a place in the navy, after being disappointed of it in the merchant service.

But how shall I behave under thy kindness? It is harder to be the Christian in prosperity than in adversity. "When Ephraim spake trembling, in Israel he exalted himself;" but when he was exalted in Israel, he offended in Baal; and when "he offended in Baal, he died." When God spares, it is that his long-suffering may lead us to repentance; and when he punishes, it is that we may return to him; for it is a heavy charge, when he has cause to complain against those to whom he has been a Father. In an afflicted state humility best becomes us, because we are laid on the dust, and where but there should we be humble? In an exalted state we should still be humble, for Heaven can dash us from the highest eminence to the lowest condition of life. And as an afflicted state is not confirmed on us, that we may have hope; so a prosperous condition is not confirmed that we may fear. "Before honour is humility, and an haughty spirit before a fall;" therefore we should always follow the one, and fly the other. As humility lifts us out of the lowest condition, so it keeps us in the highest. Nor is there any state of life but is attended with so many humbling circumstances, that no discerning soul has reason to be proud, considering that it is more disgrace to fall from an high station into a low, than never to have risen, and consequently never fall. He that loses prince's favor smarts sorer than he that never had it: and those that fall from high preferments, or lose their honorary posts, may expect to have all eyes upon them, and every tongue to dwell on them and their misfortunes.

Such, then, is our condition below, that we are always in danger, from without and from within.—Troubles may attack us without, or, if free from these, pride may swell within; and the last is worse than the first. Then, contentment with our present condition, resignation to God with respect to unseen contingencies, hope in his mercy, confidence in his faithfulness, and an eye fixed on the world to come, is our only wisdom in this world that passeth away.

MEDITATION LXIV.

MORE OF GOD SEEN IN CHRIST THAN IN ALL THE CREATION.

Under sail, Jan. 26, 1759.

THERE is a great noise among the wise men of our day, how God is to be seen and felt, as it were in his handy-works. True, O Lord! thou art near in every thing around me, but nearer in thy Son. In thy heavens I behold thy wisdom; but in thine Anointed I see thy grace, and share thy love. Thou art near in thy sun, moon, and stars, to convince atheists, but nearer in thy word of grace, to convert sinners, and comfort saints. My reason tells me, that he that formed the eye, planted the ear, and put understanding into the heart, must see, hear, and understand all things; but thou art seen in more noble and exalted views, in those graces which are infused by thy Holy Spirit into my soul. Sense and reason harmonize in this, that God made and governs the world; but faith looks back to that period when time began, and sees that by him he made the world,—and forward, when time shall be no more, and sees that by him he also shall judge the world.—Thou art near to me in the harmony of all my members, so that there is no schism in my natural body; but much nearer in the union of my soul to thee, which shall never suffer a separation. Thou art to be acknowledged in every breathing as the God of my life; but in a more glorious manner, in every act of faith, and heavenly aspiration, as the life of my soul.

Human philosophy cries up nature as the best glass to see the glory of God in; and surely, therein he is very glorious, for the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky, preaches his handy-work. But revelation, which is the sublimest philosophy, declares the face of Jesus to be the brightest mirror in which the glory of God can be seen; for there it appears with a permanent and transforming lustre. In the creation of the world, his power and wisdom are admired; but in the redemption of the world, his love and compassion are adored.

Let others please themselves with philosophical views of the well-replenished creation; but, not despising

these, let me revolve the volume of revelation, peruse the divine page, and dwell upon the plan of redeeming love, where a glorious Trinity of persons appears in the grand work of man's redemption ;—and where all the attributes and perfections of God beam forth, with a radiance and beauty that cannot pass through the grosser creation, but is even too bright for the eyes of seraphim to fix upon. Here, then, I will begin to study for eternity, and learn for the world to come.

MEDITATION LXV.

GOD IN CHRIST THE STUDY ABOVE.

Under sail, Feb. 9, 1759.

I READ with pleasure, O philosophers ! your lectures, and commend your care to make the mute creation preach the power and wisdom of the Creator : But yet, O ye learned commentators on the volumes of nature ! I shall never agree with you in thinking that this study, however useful and engaging here, shall employ the saints above. Surely, when carried above the material heavens, their search shall no more descend to our revolving spheres. When admitted by the divine intercessor into the presence of the great Creator himself, shall they carry the creature in its various laws to be their theme and subject before the throne ? By the creature they may now rise to admire the wisdom, acknowledge the goodness, and adore the power of him who made the whole ; but when arrived at God himself in all his glory, shall they again descend to meditate on even the noblest of his works, which are but the prints of his majesty, and the traces of his power ? As the apostle speaks in another sense, " after they know God" in that state of perfection, and are known of him in the communion of glory, " Shall they return again to weak and beggarly elements ?" For if the law was such when compared to the gospel, much more is natural philosophy such when compared to glory. Though the house be beautiful, yet he that builds the house has more honor than the house. Now, we may stand and admire the palace abroad ; but when admitted in, to converse with the royal family that inhabits it, would we choose to

leave their company, and retire to take a view of the windows, doors, walks, and avenues belonging to the building, while we have the furniture, the immense treasures, and precious rarities within, to behold, and the royal personages to talk with? Even so, when we pass into the highest heavens, and sit down before the throne to hold communion for eternity with Jehovah in his Son, shall we then give up with our searches into his divine excellences and adorable perfections, in order to calculate the return of a wandering comet, study the laws of the starry heavens, and explore the secrets of nature?

It is true, every thing in which God has been pleased to reveal himself, shall the saints study with delight; but as he has revealed himself more in his Son than either in creation or providence, so God in Christ shall be the uninterrupted, the pleasant, the supreme study of the saints above. His infinite glories shall eternally engage all the ravished powers of my mind to follow hard after God; and I will pursue my study while endless ages roll. I shall be so swallowed up of glory, so enamoured with the beauties of my divine Redeemer, beauties never yet beheld, and so lost in God, that my whole attention shall be totally engrossed, and I shall not have one recoiling thought on the then forgotten lessons of philosophy. In a word, if ever I arrive at that blessed place till I find no more beauty in the Rose of Sharon, no more glory in the Sun of Righteousness, no more satisfaction in continual feeling after God, and no more fulness in infinity itself, I shall never lift mine eyes from off my object, never change my theme.

MEDITATION LXVI.

THE WORLD ASLEEP.

Under sail, Feb. 9, 1759.

The whole world is, with respect to a future state, as it were fast asleep. In this night of universal darkness and ignorance, the greater part are dreaming in their sleep, and, believing themselves to be broad awake, are verily persuaded that all is *real*, because their dreams are regular. Yea, like night-walkers, they perform

the actions of a busy world in their sleep; and, confident that they are in the full use and exercise of their reason, they wage war, they buy and sell, they marry and are given in marriage, and weary and fatigue themselves in this continual dream. Now, who can persuade us in a dream, that either we ourselves are dreaming, or those we talk with in our dream? This is the true but melancholy condition of the most part of mankind: They dream, while they think themselves to be awake, and slumber over the day of life, while they seem to exert the greatest activity to obtain solid and substantial good.

Alas! neither admonition nor reproof, nor the sad example of ten thousand dreamers who have gone before, can awake individuals, till they are led by the hand of death behind the curtain, and made to look at once full on a world of spirits. Nor is the general race of slumberers to be roused, till the last trumpet sound in their affrighted ears, and eternity expand awful and unknown in their staring eyes.

There are, however, a few, (and but a few, alas!) who are spiritually awake, and whose thoughts pierce through the dark shadows of this dismal night, into the light of glory, and the regions of bliss. Such look beyond the glittering tapers and deceitful glow-worms of honors, riches, pleasures, and applause, which are the present chase, (which should be the shame,) and future cheat, (which shall be the sorrow,) of a comatose* world. And yet, in this imperfect state, even they are but like men struggling with the darkness of the night-watches, waiting for the morning-light, and wishing for the perfect day. Such, however, are the only persons who have their loins girt, and their lamps burning, in expectation of the Bridegroom, at whose coming the day will break, the shadows flee away, and a light, seven times brighter than the noon-day sun, shall shine for ever on them. Then, and not till then, shall the darkness pass, and the true light without interruption shine. While in the dark we wander, while in the gloom we grope, waiting for the longed-for day, we are ready to fall asleep, and to spend our time in slumbering thoughtlessness, in drowsy inactivity; but when the day of glory shall spring, when the light of his countenance

* Lethargic, drowsy.

is lifted up on us for ever, and the noon of uninterrupted communion spreads round us, then, unconscious of the falling shades, unconscious of returning night, divine strength from the Rock of ages shall invigorate every power of mind to adore the Most High, with all the ardor of seraphic love, an exercise as agreeable as it shall be uninterrupted and eternal.

MEDITATION LXVII.

STILL IGNORANT OF GOD BELOW.

Feb. 11, 1759.

It was a question proposed long ago, by a great teacher, in his divine lectures of God, "What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?" And it remains unanswered unto this day: "For no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him." Now, this revelation on account of our ignorance, cannot be bright; for if, when the great Teacher told us of earthly things, we could not understand them, how much less if he should tell us of heavenly things, and least of all if he should reveal to us the mysteries of his eternal Godhead!

Alas! am not I, in some respects, a Christian heathen, if I may be allowed the expression, while I pay my devotions to the *unknown God?* I walk in the twilight, I adore in a cloud, and worship I know not whom. But do I not worship God? well, what is God? Is he not a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable; wise, powerful, holy, just, good, gracious, faithful, omniscient, and omnipresent? But what it is to be infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, I neither can conceive nor tell. I stretch my thoughts on either hand in his infinity, till I lose myself in the unfathomable abyss; I revolve his eternal duration ere time began, and when time shall be no more, till all my thoughts are swallowed up. But when I have done my utmost, my conceptions are only forming some grand ideas of a creature; for as my thoughts of his infinity are circumscribed within bounds, and of his eternity come to an end, they belong to a creature, and not to the Creator. How,

then, can I repair the indignity done to his majesty by my grovelling meditations? Only thus, by confessing, that after all my stretch, his every perfection is still infinitely beyond all that I can say or think.

Hence, let me join reverence with my ignorance; holy dread, with my shallow conceptions of God; and ardent love, and profound humility, with all my devotions. Mindful that the awful mystery could be revealed by none, because none hath seen, none hath known God, let me be thankful, that "the only-begotten Son, who lay in the Father's bosom, hath declared him."

Every divine perfection, every adorable attribute, is more than sufficient to engross the study and attention of men and angels for ever; and the more they search, and the longer they learn, the more they see and confess God to be infinite and unknown.

When shall that glorious morning dawn, when my ignorance, like the early fogs that fly the rising sun, shall be no more, and the great Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, shall, in the light of glory, declare to me the God whom now at best I ignorantly adore?

MEDITATION LXVIII.

NOTHING CAN PURCHASE CHRIST FROM THE SOUL.

Under sail, Feb. 13, 1759.

"WHAT is thy Beloved more than another beloved?" was once asked of the spouse by those who knew him not so well as she did. Now, worldlings! let me hear what you will lay in the balance with my Beloved, that, in refusing your largest offers, it may appear how much I esteem my dearest Lord, and best beloved. Will ye, then, give me gold and silver till I can desire, till I can stow no more? Ah! your heaps of shining dust will not, cannot purchase him from me. Will ye give me titles, honour, and glory for him? Ah! empty sounds shall never take away from me, him who is true, solid, and substantial bliss. Will ye give me the earth for my possession, subjugate its kingdoms to my sway, tell over the stars into mine inheritance, and make the whole universe mine own? This, even all this, will not balance the loss of my beloved; for compared with his

excellences, all things are but loss and dung. Finally, will ye give me another beloved instead of him? But where can such an one be found? In him all perfections meet, in him all glories shine; in him all excellences reside, in him all plenitude abounds. All I can wish for, or desire, is to be found in him; yea, more than I can receive super-abounds in him. Now, have ye any thing in reserve to offer me for him? No! Then take up, and remove your dust and ashes, food for worms, and fuel for the flames. These could not all purchase from me one kiss of his mouth, one glance of his countenance, and far less the beloved himself. But, one word of comfort to you ere you go. Though I may not, cannot, will not sell my part and interest in my dearest Lord, yet, on his own terms, you may be possessed of him in all his glorious fulness, in whom alone you can be blessed, and without whom, in the midst of all your plenty, you must be extremely poor, and exquisitely miserable.

But now, my soul! one reproof to thee. Thou wilt not sell thine interest in Christ for any thing, nor exchange thy portion for the universe: Why, then, should not Christ, and an interest in him, be an all-sufficiency to thee? And if the universe could not content thee without Christ, why should not Christ content thee without the least dust of the universe?

MEDITATION LXIX.

TORMENT.

Under sail, Feb. 14, 1759.

MEN, and I among the rest, have a mistaken notion of torment. I shudder to hear of protracted agonies on the dying malefactor;—to hear of the rack, (invented by boundless rage, and improved by infernal cruelty,) decreed by the powerful offended party, to torture to death my fellow-creature. Yea, the groans of dying mortals pierce mine ears, and make me sharer of their pains. But what are all human inventions, when we look beyond them? what is the glittering sword, or sharpened axe? What the musket, with its deadly explosion? What the gibbet, with ten thousand specta-

tors? What the bastinadoing clubs, the stamping elephant, the quartering horses? What the piked barrels, the breaking wheel, the boots and thumbkins, the suffocating dungeon, or the calcinating flame? How do they all disappear before these words,—DIVINE VENGEANCE,—ETERNAL WRATH!

But how do the tormentors fall short of their designs, when the guilty wretch, a parricide, or a regicide, is condemned to be put to the torture so long every day, and by unfriendly intermissions of the rack, death is parcelled out in the most cruel manner which can be invented, till justice is satisfied, cruelty glutted, or till the sufferer, sinking under his pains, expires and is no more! Now, suppose this miserable wretch, (whom we conclude happy, because the scene no more affects our eyes,) to die impenitent; and suppose him also to have his choice, whether to stay in the anguish of the invisible world, or to return to the torments he lately left. How soon should we see him fondly, (so to speak,) embrace the flames, present his gaping wounds to the boiling oil and scalding lead, and his naked body to the scourging steel, and weary his tormentors! Such is the difference between the rage of man and the wrath of the Almighty. That reaches to the body, but this, in all its terrors, transfixes the soul. The one, finite in its nature, terminates in death; the other, infinite in its degrees, preys on every faculty, and swallows up the whole soul, and in its duration measures with eternity.

How amazing the love of the Father that gave his Son for sinners! How amazing the love of the Son that gave his life a ransom for many! that sustained the burning load of his Almighty Father's wrath, that our torments might sit light, and that our last pangs might translate us into the joy of our Lord.

MEDITATION LXX.

THE SOUL'S GROWTH.

Under sail, Feb. 15, 1759.

FROM my present ignorance, gloomy thoughts sometimes arise, but by some considerations I shall turn this shadow of death into the morning.

When I look back a few years, I recollect, that my thoughts about common things were much contracted to what they are now. "When I was a child, I thought as a child;" for though I heard surrounding sounds, and the speeches of all about me, yet they were too vast for me to comprehend; nor could I convey mine ideas to them in articulate words. Yea, when I rose a little from this infantile state, I could not shake myself free of my ignorance, nor form any proper notion of the embelting oceans, opposite poles, antipodes, and the earth hung upon nothing. Still I knew nothing of the heavenly bodies, of the glorious sun, splendid moon, or sparkling stars; of the beauteous rainbow, falling showers, and flashing thunders. These things, then too sublime for me to think on, are now, in some sense, both intelligible and familiar; and this arises, not from any addition of new powers, but from an increase of the faculties, (by whatever means,) of my soul.

Now, let me turn the page, and let my meditation stretch its wings towards eternal bliss. It is a reviving thought, that this soul of mine, if united to the living Son of God, the life-giving Head, shall know divine things in the light of glory. Things which I have hardly heard of, and which, for the grossness of my ignorance now, cannot enter into my heart, shall then be my darling themes. Moreover, as sun, moon, and stars, appear more beautiful to me than formerly, not from any new addition of glory to them, but by my clearer knowledge of their nature and magnitude; so that I am convinced, that if the stars were as near us as the torch of day, they would all appear as so many flaming suns; and that, if the sun himself were as near as the moon, whether I looked east or west, south or north, till my glance were terminated, still I should see nothing but one immense, insufferable, flaming firmament of fire! so when translated to the paradise of God, how shall my soul be delighted with the knowledge of the Most High, and ravished with the prospect of growing wiser and wiser in the things of God! Though my soul shall then be perfect in comparison of what she is now, and perfect with respect to all the parts of knowledge, happiness, and bliss; yet as to the extent of the degree, that shall always be on the in-

crease; for though the finite mind can never know all that is to be known of an infinite Being, who only comprehends himself, yet it will be the excellency, the delight, and employment of glorified saints, still to aspire after more and more of God.

Now, though no new perfections, attributes, excellences, or glories, shall ever be found in God, being all eternally and essentially in him, yet the longer I am in his presence, the more glorious will he be to me, because I shall know him more and more. And the more of him I know, the more shall I admire and love him; and the more I admire and love him, I shall become the liker to him; and the liker to him, the larger and more capacious will my soul become; and the more extensive the faculties of my soul are, the more shall I apprehend of God; and the more of God is apprehended and known, the more he is glorified. Thus, in an eternal progression of knowing, admiring, loving, and being assimilated to God, and of enlargement of the soul, whereby she will be enabled still the more to love, admire, and know, be assimilated to, approach, and participate of the communicable perfections of the Godhead, shall consist the uninterrupted employment, and entrancing felicity of the blessed, while, through the whole, God is all in all.

Again, if there be such a difference between my thoughts when I first essayed to speak, and when arrived at ten years of age, and between them at ten years old, and those of whom I am at present capable; what shall the divine increase of my soul be, when in the beatific vision of Jehovah and the Lamb, I shall have been an astonished, ravished, ardent adorer for a thousand years, and add to that another thousand, till numbers fail, and computation is swallowed up in eternity itself? Shall I not kindle in his love, brighten in his flame, and be assimilated to him in his eternal irradiation?

Again, when I consider the vast disproportion there is among the mental faculties of the sons of men, so that one has the most absurd views of all things, while another has adequate conceptions of most things, and sublime though imperfect apprehensions of God himself, I stand amazed to find, not only that the meanest saint, who is united to him in whom the fulness of the

Godhead dwells bodily, far outshines the wisest men of the world, but that one saint differs greatly from another, not only in this world but in the world to come. In the firmament of bliss, star differeth from star in glory, yet every star is glorious, and full of glory. Now, this difference of degrees in glory is begun below. "He that sows sparingly, shall also reap sparingly; but he that sows plentifully, shall reap plentifully" for ever. The soul that burns in the fire of love, shall come forth an immortal phœnix; and as beds of gold are said to ripen in the beams of the sun, so shall they who lie most in the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, ripen into the brightest glory. Now, when all are plunged into felicity and glory, every soul shall be perfect, and replenished with glory; yet every soul shall preserve its attainments, keep the happy start, and retain its growth, when the weak are as the house of David, and the house of David as the angel of God. Therefore, the larger and more capacious the soul is, in an higher manner is God known; and the more God is known, the more he is glorified; and this advantage is to be pursued after, below. This is the seed-time for a plenteous eternity. This is the ambition God allows, the avarice heaven commends. What are kingdoms, crowns, or titles, what riches, glory, fame, in comparison of this, to get my soul dilated, enlarged, capacitated to receive much of God, by which he will be glorified the more, and in which will consist the quintessence of my felicity for ever?

MEDITATION LXXI.

THIS LIFE A VALE OF TEARS.

Feb. 19, 1759.

Why have I mistaken this thorny wilderness for a garden of flowers? this place of danger for a palace of delight? and this howling desert for an enchanting grove? If the world has joys, it has none for me; they are carnal or unlawful, mine must be pure and spiritual. If the creature affords pleasures, they cannot suit my soul; its honey is mixed with gall, its sweet with wormwood, its wine with water, its gold with dross,

and all it yields with poison. The pleasures I should seek are such as my soul may feed on without danger, feast on without surfeiting, and rejoice in without sin.

Again, why do I expect comfort in this world? Can I hope, or even desire, to go through the valley of tears singing? or to dwell in the house of mourning laughing? Would I fare better than my best friend? While here, he was a man of sorrows, and shall I not taste the briny cup? He was acquainted with grief, and shall I be a stranger to it? Would I be kindly entertained in that very place where he had not where to lay his head? Would I fare like the kings of the earth, when King of kings fared not so well as the fowls of heaven, or the foxes of the field? Would I go another way to glory than the saints ever trode! Would I go through one heaven to another, when it is through much tribulation I must enter into the kingdom? Can the children of the bride-chamber be glad when the Bridegroom is not with them? Can I be easy, can I be quiet, among the enemies of my Lord the King, where the general voice is, "Shall this man reign over us? We will not have him for our king, we will not take him for our Saviour."

Oh! that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the sins of my fellow-creatures, for the slain of my fellow-sinners! Let sorrow seize on my heart, and grief fix her iron talons there; it is all I can do for the honour of my Lord. I shall know no grief but for thee, no joy but in thee;—no grief but in thee, wounded in thy glory, blasphemed in thy name, disbelieved in thy promises, defamed in thy holiness, abused in thy saints, contemned in thy threatenings, slighted in thy love, and contradicted in thy truth;—no joy but in thee, as my only portion, my exceeding great reward;—no comfort but in thee, conquering in the everlasting gospel, and worshipped from the rising to the setting sun.

This is the night of weeping; and though weeping endure through the night of time, yet joy cometh in the morning of eternity. I must fight while on the field of battle; and it is enough to get the crown when won. I am as an hireling, and I must not lie down to rest till the evening-shadows cover my weary limbs. The world is too barren a soil to bear true joy; for where sin *with-*

in and *round about* abounds, how can consolation triumph, which rises only as the other falls, and falls as the opposite rises? But in this my comfort lies, that though in the world I shall have trouble, yet in him I may be of good cheer, because he has overcome the world. Moreover, in midst of all the sorrow that now surrounds me, I have an inward joy that causes all my bones to sing and blossom with the beautiful prospect of a joy coming from its divine fountain, which without the least fear of returning sorrow, shall be the strength of my soul for ever.

MEDITATION LXXII.

THE MADNESS OF THE WORLD IN THEIR CHOICE.

Under sail, Feb. 19, 1759.

Why rejects the world the Saviour of the world? Why abhor they him who is altogether lovely, and hate him who is the best Friend of mankind? Had I the tongue of a cherub, that has heard the language of glory, and mingled in the discourse of the hosts before the throne for these five thousand years; or could I talk in every tongue, extend my voice to every nation, and speak so loud and long, that the assembled universe should hear, what should be my theme, my darling, favourite theme? Surely the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. How would I dwell on his divine name, and enlarge on his transporting relations, till all the needy nations fell prostrate adorers before the throne of their kinsman-Redeemer, and their God! But if they disdained to listen to a fellow-creature, how would my soul cheerfully pour out herself into articulate thunder, or distinct echo, thereby to repeat his praise and convey his excellences into the ear of thousands, and ten thousands of attentive hearers, till they should submit to him, bow the knee, and begin the work of heaven on earth. Then would I, with contentment, drop down into the dust, mingle with my kindred clay, and be no more. Yea, what would it matter though I should no more exist, if ten thousand thousand warbling tongues were added to the general song, to extol the fairest One, the Plant of renown, for ever? Such an insignificant

nothing as I am, would make no blank in the list of beings, or the roll of creation; and O what massy joy would it afford me to think of the happiness of millions of my fellow-creatures!—But to quit with my being, I must quit with thee, my life, my love, my God, my all! I fly the very thought, and to my happiness shall still exist, and to my greater happiness still, exist the friend of God!

But what shall I do for my best Beloved? I dare not sometimes speak of him, and many times on his account I am a derision. But, O men of the world! what can you desire that is not in Christ? What distress can you dread, from which he cannot deliver you? The excellences of earth are but his footstool, the excellences of heaven are but his throne; how excellent, then, must he himself be! His treasures are infinite, and open for you: Riches, if ye are poor; honor, if ye are despised; friendship, if ye are forsaken; help, if ye are orphans; justice, if ye are injured; mercy, if ye are miserable; joy, if ye are disconsolate; protection, if ye are exposed; deliverance, if ye are in danger; health, if ye are in disease; life, if ye are mortal; and, in brief, all things, if ye have nothing at all. Time and eternity are his, and he can give you all the good things of the one, and all the glorious things of the other. Moreover, he can deliver you from all your fears; from sin, the worst of all evils; from self, the most hurtful of all companions; from death, the most awful of all changes; from Satan, the most subtle of all enemies; from hell, the most horrible of all prisons; and from wrath, the doom of all sinners.

Now, where will ye find such an one as he? Why, then, refuse life, and seek after death? All heaven is enamored with his beauty; and why, then, will ye prefer a midnight-gloom before his meridian glory? The longer we look on created gaieties, they grow the leaner and more ill-favored; so that, by the time we have viewed them forty, fifty, or sixty years, we see nothing but vanity in the creature; but when ten thousand ages are employed in beholding this Perfection of beauty, still he appears more and more lovely, even altogether lovely. Why will not the world awaken from its fatal dream, let go shadows, and grasp at everlasting sub-

stance? Alas! I can say nothing of his excellences; they overwhelm my laboring thought, and are too vast for my feeble conception to bring forth.

But let the world choose whom or what it will for a portion, still, as for me and my house, and all I can prevail upon, we will choose this well-beloved, and serve this Lord.

MEDITATION LXXIII.

THE APPROACHING HAPPINESS OF THE SAINTS.

Feb. 23, 1759.

To escape my sorrow, and triumph in the midst of grief, let me suppose futurity present, and eternity at hand, which *may* very soon, but *must* ere long, be the case. May I not, then, with the eye of all-triumphant faith, think I see myself walking with my well-beloved in white along the fields of glory, and my whole soul going out to him in a manner it never could below! While floods of glory from his reconciled face overflow me, and the smile of his amiable countenance entrances my soul for ever! While I join the hosannas of the higher house, the eternal hallelujahs, and begin the song which none can learn but the chosen number, the sealed ones! With what transport do I mingle with the hosts of God, and, to my extreme comfort, fear not one sinner in the heavenly company, or any thing expressed against the majesty of the Most High! Where all the heavenly multitudes, transforming in his beams, kindling in his flames, and drinking at his ecstatic rivers, are happy beyond conception.

Such is the felicity the saints shall enter into, yea, in a manner are entered into already. So short is the interval between *now* and *then*, this present and that future state, that their glory is as it were begun. Faith and hope entering like an anchor within the vail, the saints of God rise at one step from this vale of tears, to the hill of God, to the mount of communion. Now, why should the noise of the rabble, or uproar of the street, trouble me, when I am entering the very door of my everlasting habitation, and shall soon be eternally out of the reach of their confusion and murmurs?

Henceforth, let the near prospect of that eternal triumph blunt my present grief, scatter my troubles, and spread serenity in my breast.

MEDITATION LXXIV.

WHAT WE SHOULD EXPECT AND WAIT FOR.

Gibraltar Bay, Feb. 24, 1759.

How are our joys heightened by hope, and that sometimes an hope that is false! And how vainly are our expectations pointed at some future enjoyment, which, when it comes, shall perhaps disappoint us in the enjoyment! Yet, for such things we long, though, in a manner, we are hankering after our own misery. But how much does it rather become me, if I be an heir of God, an expectant of bliss, and a candidate for glory, to be waiting for him who shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation; to be hastening unto the day of the Lord, and crying, "Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariot?" When will these empyrean heavens divide, to let my Lord descend? When will these celestial doors fly open, that the exalted One may come in all his state, in his own and in his Father's glory, with his holy angels? When shall the starry way of eternal communion be stretched out between the highest heavens, and the new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness? When shall I begin to behold him in all his glory, whom eye hath not seen, and to see thee without a cloud, who art altogether lovely! When shall my soul be revived with the smell of the Rose of Sharon in the paradise of God, and sit down with great delight under the shadow of the Tree of life, the Plant of renown, and eat of thy immortalizing fruit, and drink of thy refined wine? When shall I join my songs with the anthems of eternity, and mingle my grateful notes with the harpers round the throne? When shall the hiding hills, the intervening heights, be molten down by the beatific vision of thy blessed self, and the valley of darkness, and deeps of despondency, rise into the mount of communion? When shall I enter into the joy of my Lord, walk with thee in white, and be satisfied with thy likeness? Then shall I know

thee as I expect, praise thee as I aspire after, and love thee as I would.

MEDITATION LXXV.

THE SPIRITUAL MISER.

Gibraltar Bay, Feb. 25, 1759.

WHO is more an object of ridicule than the rich miser, that goes supperless to bed, because he will not give one farthing out of his immense sums to purchase it; being afraid to live on what he is never able to spend, and anxious to heap up what he can never enjoy.

Shall I, then, act the miser in spiritual things? Shall I be afraid to live on the all-sufficient fulness of my Lord, lest his stores decay? Shall I spare to drink of his overflowing ocean, lest it grow dry before my face? Heaven no less loves a liberal receiver, than a liberal giver. Is it decorous to hunger at the table of the king, or to say to the enriching hand, Hold, thou canst not spare so much? The miser's wretched parsimony may, after his death, advantage his heirs, and, in the mean time, accumulate his own riches; but the case is not so with me. My living for the present poorly and sparingly on the promises, will never advantage my after-state, nor leave any greater plenty for other saints; neither will it make the celestial treasures any fuller, that I fetch not daily from them. Though Daniel looked fairer than those that fed on the polluted bread of the king of Babylon, yet my soul will look but thin and lean, unless it feed and feast on the daily allowance of the King of glory, whose table is covered with an infinite plenty. All the angels and all the saints may banquet continually without lessening the divine store, which, as to the display and manifestation, increases, as once or twice in the days of his flesh, among the numerous eaters, and grows among the happy guests. Why then pine at such a table, starve in the midst of so much plenty, and convert divine liberality into the parsimony of unbelief? Shall I confine that bounty that is rather nonpiussed where to pour its plenitude, (because few will accept of Christ and his fulness,) than at a loss for a superabundancy to bestow?

Henceforth let my soul by faith live at large on the promises, and be spiritually grand at the expenses of the King, who will not grudge it. Let me put on the royal apparel of the Son of God, the vesture of imputed righteousness; and, as a sign that this is the embroidered garment of my inner man, keep clean hands, and an holy walk. Why should I creep and grovel in the by-ways of darkness, and foot-paths of despondency, when I may ride in the chariot of the covenant, which Solomon has built for the daughters of Jerusalem, and paved its midst with love? Why should I walk a-foot through fear and faithlessness, when my seat is empty there, and none can take it up? Then, to the honor of him to whom I belong, I will appear like one of the royal family of heaven. I will rejoice in him always, and again I will rejoice. I will feast my soul with his divine dainties, and suck the honey of the promises. I will satiate myself with his goodness, and drink at his river that gladdens the city of God. I will not dwell in the shadow of sorrow, but come out and walk in the light of his countenance, in the brightness of his glory. I will importune his sin-subduing grace, and plead for strength to fight the battles of the Lord, that in his name I may conquer all my foes. I will expatiate on the opulence of my treasure, the extent of my inheritance, and the excellences of my Beloved; and live to the glory of him who giveth me all things richly to enjoy, according to the rank of an heir of God, according to the grandeur of a joint-heir with Christ.

MEDITATION LXXVI.

CONTRADICTIONS.

Gibraltar Bay, Feb. 26, 1759.

I AM ever guilty of some folly, some unaccountable folly; and either my faith condemns my fears, or my fears accuse my faith of folly. If I may safely trust to God as my guardian and guide, in the shadow, in the darkness of death, where, for all my friends, where, for the whole world, I must walk alone; why should I distrust him in the high-way of life, where thousands walk with me? Dare I commit the concerns of my soul

to him, and hope for salvation in his name, yet distrust him with the cares of my present life, nor hope for its necessaries in his providence? Can I venture my soul into his hand, and think it safe through the intricate mazes of an eternal duration, yet doubt if I may depend on his promise and providence, through the few windings of a transitory life? Or will God care for the soul, but cast off the body? Will he feed the raven, deck the lily, but starve the saint? Will he give of the good things of this life, even to superfluity, to his enemies, and withhold necessary supplies from his people? A naked supply here is enough for those that shall inherit all things hereafter. Can he guide the stars in their courses, and the orderly revolution of day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, and not over-rule the occurrences of my life? Can he, who has given up his Son freely for me, not as freely to me with him give all good things? Do I conceit God to be the God of the mountains of eternity, but not of the valleys of time; and that because his habitation is in the heights of glory, he governs not the deep places of the earth, which are also in his hand? How great a beast in sacred matters am I, who can devolve my great all on him, and yet distrust him with trifles, and what is nothing at all!

Now, as all I seek is to enter the gate of glory, not anxious what will become of me afterward, or how the vast demands of my enlarged soul, mine immortal powers, shall be supplied through endless ages; even so, as I am already entered among the numerous beings of this lower orb, all which are supplied from his bounty, preserved by his power, and governed by his providence, I have no cause of anxiety about my present situation, about my passing life; only, in the lawful use of lawful means, to commit all into his hand, who does all things well, and gives to all his people an expected end.

MEDITATION LXXVII.

THE CONFUSION OF THE WICKED AT THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

Gibraltar Bay, Feb. 28, 1759.

Alas! men now sin with impunity and boldness; but when I dart my thoughts beyond the grave, and see the

sinning multitude gathered before the awful bar, the angry tribunal, the vindictive Judge, how will they look! Have I ever seen one affronted, and put to the blush? One sentenced to infamy, one put into the highest throes of unruly passion, or one condemned to death? All this is but like modesty blushing, in comparison of the confusion of guilt, and the eternal gloom of horror, which shall take fast hold on them, when the incensed Judge pronounces their sentence in these killing words, *Depart from me.* Where will they hide their guilty heads, and where conceal their shame? They will not be able to cover with a good countenance their condemnation, as they do now their sin which causes it. How will the ground shake, and the earth tremble beneath the trembling multitude! What fearful aspects! what rueful looks! what rolling eyes! what frightful gestures! what lamentable howlings! what doleful bewailings! what preposterous complaints! what despairing expressions! what agonizing groans! what intolerable horror! what gnawing anguish! what starings of guilt! what roarings of awakened conscience! and what horrible blasphemies against the divine Judge himself, shall they be subject to, and employed in, in that tremendous day! How will they call to the hills to hide them, and run to be lost in the ruins of the tumbling rocks, but in vain!

But whence will these spectres come, these trembling ones be gathered? From another world? Ah! they are even of these gay and gallant ones, who now walk the round of life, jocund and unconcerned, and ignorant of godly sorrow! but who shall then be overwhelmed, and that for ever, with a grief too vast for language to express, too tremendous and unintellible for conception to apprehend; but such as every son of man, in the time of hope, the place of repentance, and day of grace, should study to escape; for even Bedlam, compared to them, is an house of sober-witted men! Who knows the power of thy wrath? Who knows it but the damned? And yet they know it not, for an eternity of torment is but teaching them the agonizing lesson. Who dares to know it, but the bold, the blind, the headstrong sinner, who never puts the question to himself that concerns him most, and might awake him,

" Who of us can dwell with devouring fire? Who with everlasting burnings? How shall we escape the wrath to come?"

MEDITATION LXXVIII.

MERCIES ABUSED.

Gibraltar Bay, March 1, 1759.

Many are the mercies we receive from heaven; but it is shocking to think how we convert these mercies into an occasion of sin, and make them the cause of awful miseries. By the senses of the body the soul is wounded, (and yet the loss of any one sense is a sensible affliction; while our eyes, which should look right on, and by which we may search the scriptures of truth, are full of adultery, and used only in conveying vain objects to our mind; while our ears, that should hear the sound of the everlasting gospel, the words of life, take in only blasphemies, backbitings, evil reports, impure discourse, vain janglings, and contentions; and, alas! are entertained therewith: While our lips and tongues, that should move only to mutual edification, are employed in detraction and slander, and dwell on profane and trifling themes; and while our feet, that should carry us to the house of God, and about our lawful affairs, run only to mischief, and are swift in the ways of wickedness.

Moreover, we abuse common mercies also, turning a full table into gluttony and drunkenness; competency into excess; plenty into extravagance; apparel into pride; station into vain show; confidence into arrogance; riches into presumption; honour into haughtiness; and power into oppression. Yea, we also abuse mercies of a more noble nature, while we employ our wisdom in wrangling, our parts in perverse disputings, our attainments in ostentation, and our knowledge in emulation. Finally, in every thing we offend: while under afflictions we are faithless; in trials, distrust the promise; and when disappointed, despond. Of deliverance, we are forgetful; in prosperity, secure; in sickness, sullen or stupid, and in health, full of levity, and a delight in earthly things. Thus, by the abuse of mercies, we turn the grace of God into wantonness.

Surely the mercies of the Most High are above all his works, and fill the earth. He continues to bestow those very mercies on us, which we so much abuse, when he might at once strike us blind, dumb, and deaf; when he might at once blow upon our blessings, and cause our table-comforts to decay; when he might tread us in the mire of adversity, and cause the waters of affliction to flow over our heads; when he might blast our judgment, sense, and reason, and, turning us into idiots, make us objects of pity to all; and when he might hide his countenance, and make us go mourning without the sun. To him, whose mercies know no bound, let our praises know no end.

MEDITATION LXXIX.

THE FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

Gibraltar Bay, March 2, 1759.

To forgive our enemies, and forget the injuries which have been done us, is a noble, though very difficult duty; and from the opposition it meets with from within, I find that it is above the natural man to perform. Nature would make less resistance to it, if it were less godlike and divine. There are some men who have done me injuries in more respects than one; and, alas! I find that I can scarcely recollect their names without these injuries, though done to me years ago, presenting themselves as if they had happened yesterday. This shows the rancour of my mind, and the deep impressions such things make there, while the mercies of the Most High are shamefully forgotten. But now let me compose my mind, and reconcile it to the duties of Christianity.

The whole law hangs on this, to love God and my neighbour, and if I love the one I shall love the other: but if I love not him whom I have seen, how can I love him whom I have not seen? Now, my neighbor is not he who does me benign actions, for such the worst of sinners love and regard, but every one of the human race round about me.—Whatsoever they do to me, that cannot loose a relation that is indissolvable. When they defame me, I must speak well of them; when

they revile me, I must intreat. Though they would starve me, I must feed their hunger; though they strip me, I must kindly clothe their nakedness; though they curse, I must bless; though they persecute, I must pray; and though they rise up in war against me, yet when they yield themselves prisoners, and so become suppliants for mercy, I must not slay them, but preserve them alive, protect them, pour oil into their wounds, and supply their necessities. Yet this universal forgiveness is not, by a too extensive clemency, to oppose the exercise of justice in respect of murderers, nor infringe the moral law with regard to those that should die. But, alas! instead of being in danger of erring on this, I am on the opposite extreme; for while I should forgive what they do against me, and pray for forgiveness of that whereby they have sinned against God, I neither forgive them myself, nor seek forgiveness from heaven to them.

Now, if I should thus behave with the men of the world, how should I behave with the saints, who are the excellent ones of the earth? However they may deal with me in this world, that cannot loose the tie, or dissolve the brotherhood, which is firm in him of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. Can a trivial difference break a bond that is firmer than flesh and blood? They can never much harm me in worldly things, who are for Christ in spiritual; and though the old man between us should fall out, yet the new man shall ever be friends. If the contention between corruption and corruption be so sharp, that conversation for a time is broken off, yet I shall talk with them in my love, and embrace them in mine affection; and we will only esteem one another like friends separated for a time, who will have greater joy at meeting. Here we are in the body, and therefore should bear one another's burdens. We cannot live like angels in this imperfect state; why then should I catch like a serpent at the failings of others? Will the hand refuse to feed the mouth, because the foot has stumbled? Is it comely for the members of one body to fall a-jarring with one another? Is it comely for one to cast off some Christian duties, because another Christian has some failings? Would to God all the world were the friends of Christ, though

they were my foes; then should I love them, and delight in them: for when the sanctified ones are all assembled before the throne, there eternal harmony shall reign, concord and amity prevail; there differences shall be swallowed up in the divine overflowings of eternal love. Why then, on any account, should my affection be cold towards them, towards whom it shall glow for ever, when they are arrayed with the divine likeness of the Son of God? Let me therefore bury all my injuries in the deepest oblivion, be reconciled to my friends, however they have dealt with me; and if ever I remember any thing they have done amiss, let it be only to magnify the goodness of God, who excels so far the best of creatures, and outdoes in sympathy and kindness the most tender-hearted friend, but not to diminish my love of them who are still the excellent ones of the earth.

Whether the difference be civil or religious, the time approaches, O saint! when thou and I shall forget our sharp contests, as waters that flow away. When we meet on the heavenly Mount Zion, we shall meet as angels, and embrace as seraphim.

When we put on the perfection of the triumphant state, we shall put off self, the narrow spirit, and uncharitable thought. In the light of glory we shall see eye to eye; and as we are all united to Christ, being one with him who is one with the Father, so we shall be united to one another, being all one in him. Were not shame the daughter of sin, which therefore ceases when sin is no more, as the stream when the fountain fails, surely we should blush that ever the *thine* and *mine* about perishing things should hinder us, who shall see the whole world in flames, from conversing about that after state, those new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, that perfect plenitude that remains for both. Come then, and let us antedate eternity, by throwing differences of every kind away, and becoming one in harmony and peace. Let us crucify self, and the better part will re-unite. It is not strange that men of such passions should fall out, but it is strange that men of such expectations should live and die in a difference. Let it not, then, my soul, fail on on thy side. Forgive, forget, remember injuries no

more than if they had never been done thee. Triumph in oblivion. Be valiant in conquering pride, wrath, and revenge. Expect not the concession on his side that has done thee wrong; but do thou rather yield, and win him by thy gentle and Christian behaviour under thy injuries. Fix thine eye on that future tranquility which shall be enjoyed in heaven, and that will instruct thee how to guide thyself now. Anger rests only in the bosom of fools. Entertain not a disposition of mind that thou wouldst gladly be quit of when going into eternity. Think little of thyself, and thou wilt not take it ill that others think the same. Strive for the highest degree of Christian purity, gospel-perfection, attainable below. Lift up thine eye to the other world, and in all things remember, prepare, and look out for the coming of the Lord, who will be the joy and peace of his people to eternity.

MEDITATION LXXX.

THE EXCELLENCY OF RELIGION.

Under sail, March 4, 1739.

The world may say as it will of religion, but it is only by it that the human mind is exalted, and men rise into angels. The pleasures of religion sweeten my acid griefs, and blunt my acute pains. In this I triumph over my troubles, defy mine enemies, and outrun my woes. Here I relish unseen realties, taste spiritual joys, and eat of the hidden manna. Here, in the chariot of the covenant, seated in the promise, Elijah-like, I leave the whole creation, and wing to the inheritance above, where at once I am possessed of the divine plenitude of the Eternal, bathe in life's crystal streams, and bask in his meridian ray: Where I shall drink, (and the time is not far distant,) the immortalizing draught, and eat the bread of life in the kingdom of God: where my raptured tongue shall join its anthem with the harpers round the throne, and never cease, and never tire: Where I shall see him who is altogether lovely, in the brightest displays of his glory, and hear the tenderest expressions of his everlasting love: Where I shall share of his excellences, participate of his divine nature, and

put on his amazing similitude: Where I shall enjoy an ineffable union with my living Head, and know, in the largest meaning of the word, that "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit:" Where communion between the well-beloved and his spouse shall be full and free, to the ecstasy of every power of the mind: Where I shall be allowed an access so near, that it shall astonish me in my very approaches: Where I shall sit before his throne, walk with him in white, and in his temple speak of his glory: Where I shall launch out into the unfathomable ocean of his infinite perfections, and be eternally lost in the divine review: Where I shall no more be vexed with an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, but have my soul immoveably fixed on the unchangeable God: Where my body in all its members, my soul in all her faculties, shall be holy and pure, and go unweariedly out on God: Where the least temptation shall not whisper in mine ear, nor the carnal speech, nor profaning tongue, (O happy days!) grate the sanctified organ, but loud encomiums to him that loved us, from all the hosts around the throne, convey the harmony of eternal song, to soothe my every power into the profoundest ecstasy, and to excite my song to confess his essential glories in sublimest anthems: Where I shall see the King eternal in his immaculate beauty, worship him without hypocrisy, serve him without wearying, behold him and not die, approach his throne without terror, know him, (being relieved from misapprehensions,) as he is, see him in all his greatness, yet not, Daniel-like, be weakened, but strengthened by the vision; delight in him without slavish fear, love him without reserve, and be like him without contradiction: Where I shall see him in his robes of state, in his essential glories, dwelling in very deed with men, though the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, and showing them his goings, his majestic steps in the highest sanctuary, the holy of holies, and making all his goodness to pass eternally before their wondering, their adoring, their ravished eyes!

With such endearing prospects, such reviving expectations, as these, my soul is refreshed in religion. But what is on the other hand? What have the irreligious, who relish none of these things, to expect, but gulphs

of horror, pits of despair, seas of fire, oceans of vengeance, chains of wrath, floods of indignation, unutterable anguish, utter darkness, eternal torments, and such a scene of agonies as chills my thoughts.

MEDITATION LXXXI.

CHRIST, AND NONE BUT HE, SATISFIETH DESIRES.

Under sail, March 7, 1759.

THERE is a restless, a boundless desire in the mind of man for something which this world in all its glory is unable to bestow. This immortal appetite, this living desire, blinded mortals seek to gratify, some on honor, others on pleasure, some on riches, others on empire and glory; and need we therefore be surprised that they are never satisfied? Though I could trace my pedigree through illustrious heroes, and renowned kings, back to the first foundation of kingdoms, this would not furnish my soul with all it would desire. Though I had the knowledge of all the sons of men summed up in myself, so that the eastern magi and wisest philosophers might come and learn at my feet, still my desire would have its void to fill. Though I had all magnificent titles, honorary epithets, aggrandizing distinctions, and appellations of renown, even these would not fill the extensive blank. Though I had the uncontroiled dominion of the whole universe devolved on me, so that my name were revered in every nation, statues set up to me in all lands, and my fame and glory echoed through the subject-kingdoms, still would my desires be making new demands. Though Arabia, as my possession, should present me all her fragrant gums, the Indies, as mine inheritance, amass for me their riches, and all kingdoms, as tributary, send me their productions; though the earth should burst open all her silver veins and golden mines to enrich my treasures; though my throne were of one pearl, and my crown of one diamond; though my life-guards were kings, my menial servants princes, and my immediate subjects nobles; though the daily guests of my table were thousands and ten thousands of honorable personages; and though, for the entertainment of my table,

my flocks should cover every hill, my herds range over every flowery vale, and the fowls of every wing alight around my palace, while the fish of every fin came, when needed, spontaneously ashore; though the fountains should flow with oil, the rivers stream with wine, and the forests drop honey; yet my heart would not say, It is enough. Though perpetual summer should shine on the place of my habitation, and storms and tempests stand at a distance from my abode; though, according to the philosopher's conceits, the worlds on the other side the sun should own my sceptre; though the sparkling stars, the glories of the higher firmament, that rise sphere above sphere innumerable, were added to my inheritance; though I had the faculties of the first sons of light, the knowledge of an angel, and the penetration of a seraph; there would still be something wanting, without which I could not be happy. Though my health were never attacked by sickness, but my family flourishing as the blooming flowers, my offspring numerous as the piles of grass that clothe the verdant plain, and never lessened by death; and though in this happiness I should multiply my days as the eagle, and my years as the sand; yet my desires would then be as far from being satisfied, as when I began to enjoy this shadowy, this imaginary all.

Where, then, is this all-sufficient plenitude to be found? or what is it that will satiate my immense desires? A triune God reconciled in his own Son, and conveying himself in the promise to my faith, as the spiritual riches, infinite plenitude, and eternal portion of my immortal soul.

All the gathered parts of creation, knowledge, titles, honor, riches, renown, attendants, dependants, family, friends, connexion, dominion, health, longevity, and every other excellence, are but like a drop to my parched soul, of which I could swallow many, and yet be altogether faint beneath the scorching beam. But Christ is an ocean of overflowing fulness. I stand on its shore, and am astonished; I look, and in its boundless extension lose myself; I possess, and am replenished that I can desire no more. What a divine plenitude is this divine ONE! All things without Christ cannot give satisfaction; for truly without Christ all things are noth-

ing, but with him what seems next to nothing is more and better than the worldling's all things. Material things, however excellent, suit not, satisfy not the immaterial and immortal soul; but in Christ there is something that satiates, refreshes, and enraptures the believing soul, even when my prospect is towards that tremendous day, when nature shall be set on flames; or further still, towards eternity, where the creature dares not present itself as a proper portion for the soul. "In him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" and my desires are complete in him. I can go no further, I can wish no more than he has. Then, for the present, I am happier than the happiest worldling, having an heaven in possession, for "faith is the substance of things hoped;" while an heaven of rapture and delight, floods of ecstacy and bliss, are in reserve for me, to be bestowed at the general DEAL of glory to the sons of God.

MEDITATION LXXXII.

THE AGGRANDIZING VISIT.

Mediterranean Sea, March 10, 1759.

IF a fellow-creature, who has gathered together more riches than many of his acquaintance, or has attained to more honour, and has more high-sounding titles than others, condescends, as they call it, to visit an inferior, or to admit an inferior to visit him, the whole neighbourhood is astonished, and the men that receive the compliment consider themselves as highly honoured by it. Yet what is this person with whose visit they are so delighted, but a worm of the earth, a grasshopper, that crawls on the face of the ground? As however, infinite wisdom has divided the inhabitants of the world into different classes, distinctions, and orders, for a time, the sons of men are not to despise such a visit; but as it is only for a time, the saints, the sons of God, are not to idolize it, or think that riches and honour are the channel through which the favour and love of God to his people is conveyed.

But how stupid are the world, that never observe the great honour done to the saints, when the royal family

of heaven makes them an abiding visit! "Behold I stand at the door, and knock; and if any man hear my voice, and open to me, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." There the Creator and creature sit at one table! and God, to the astonishment of angels, is gone to be guest with men! Such a visit is to be contended for; such a guest is to be received with open arms, and entertained with flowing love, like that of the spouse, who said, "While the King sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." Nor is the heavenly visit a transient one, like those among the sons of men; for, says the glorious visitant, "If a man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

It is much to see a great person visit a poor man, more to see a king enter the homely roof, but most of all, if ever after the visit he were to keep his court at the humble cottage. Yet if it holds true, that "where the king is, there is the court," surely it is so here; for, however meanly the saints think of themselves, (which, for many reasons, it well becomes them to do, though God deals kindly with them,) yet since the King and the King's Son, even the eternal, undivided family of heaven, dwells with them, there must be the life-guards of immortal angels, and thousands of fiery chariots, to defend them from all dangers, to deliver them from all foes. How happy, then, are the saints of God! how happy the select number, whom the world think so meanly of, and count so miserable!

But, again, great men may make a visit to poor creatures without changing their condition. It will not make a poor man rich, that a rich man visits him, unless he proves a liberal donor, or a generous benefactor also. Nor will it exalt a subject, a slave to a throne, that a king comes to see him. But it is otherwise here: Heaven is always in the visit of the Most High; and whatever the man has been before, he is assuredly an heir of glory, with whom God comes to dwell. For as by his Spirit he dwells in and with his people for eternity, so by faith here, and vision hereafter, they dwell in and with him for the same desirable term. O then that the saints would think more highly of themselves,

in living above the world, and its vanities, and in walking like those whom the King Eternal honors with a visit! Should any of their surly and ill-natured neighbors make them sad of heart, when the Lord of heaven and earth countenances them in so singular a manner?

Now, if it aggrandizes men, that the nobles of the earth visit them, and that great men take any notice of them, surely the saints are to me the most excellent of all men, with whom the God of glory condescends to dwell. But how shall I evidence that God dwells with me? By walking like one who has been with Jesus, with an heavenly mien and divine carriage. Then, let the King of glory visit my heart, and I shall never seek to tread in the courts of kings. Let my conversation be in heaven, and I shall not care, though the great men of the world never converse with me. Between my soul and the throne let a daily correspondence be kept up, and I shall cheerfully live in the most complete retirement, and recluse solitude from all mankind.

MEDITATION LXXXIII.

CAUSES OF HUMILITY.

Under sail, Streights, March 15, 1759.

As only in night-dreams I cross impassable rivers, climb tremendous precipices, or fly in the open air; so it is only in spiritual slumber that I mount on the imaginary wing, climb the height of self-conceit, and stand on the precipice of pride. Were I truly awake, instead of being puffed up, I should tremble at my situation. In truth, there is nothing either in the fortune, persons, or minds of the sons of men, that ought to make them proud. We need never be proud of riches; for, besides the disquieting nature of them, we can never be possessed of so vast a sum, but we may die beggars; nor of honour, for our glory may turn into disgrace, and our character into reproach; nor of offspring, for death, like a lion, waits only the permissive nod to devour every one of them; nor of strength, health, or beauty, for disease lies dormant in every part, ready to break out into the canker of corruption; nor of any faculty of the mind, seeing our brightest wis-

dom is but folly to God, yea, to angels; and sickness can deprive us of the boasted possession, and render us objects of pity unto all.

I see, then, that pride springs from blindness and inconsideration; but how surprising is this, that one who has his eyes open to the things of God should be guilty herein! Now, as spiritual things are more noble and more excellent than carnal things, so spiritual pride is more abominable than carnal: for the saint, of all men, should be most humble. Whence, then, these risings of heart? whence this self-conceit, and high opinion of myself? Is God good, and must I turn the grace of God into wantonness? Surely, if ever I have cause to fear the sincerity of my graces, it is when I grow proud of them. Grace is an humble thing; it thinks meanly of all but Christ; it keeps an eye ever open to its own failings; and though believingly bold, yet being conscious of its imperfection, it wears a blush before the throne.

The reasons of my mental elevation are merely imaginary, but I have a thousand real causes of the profoundest humility. Where are all my carnal thoughts, even in my solemn devotion? Where are all my ambitious lustings, my unbelieving circumscribings of the power of God? my misimprovement of judgments and of mercies? my attachment to the things of time, and stupidity about the things of eternity? my ignorance of God, and of things spiritual, heavenly, and divine? Yea, besides all these, the daily iniquity of my heels may always keep me humble.

Pride may advance for its ill-supported plea, that one is useful in his day and generation, for the support of religion, and suppression of vice, and that he has exerted his brightest talents that way, perhaps suffered persecution, or been in danger of martyrdom. But say, my soul, if a king shall send a nobleman as his ambassadar abroad, maintaining him according to his dignity, will he think himself obliged to that honorary servant? No; he will rather think him obliged to give his sovereign an account of the trust committed to him, and answerable at his peril if any thing is done against the honor of his crown. How, then, are the saints of God, ignorant, that to whom God is pleased to give

much of them he will require the more? Surely the saint in a private capacity, who knows only Christ and him crucified, and is neither qualified for, nor called to public work, but lives a life of faith upon the unseen Son of God, is in a more happy state than many apprehend. For when the King Eternal comes from a far country, he will call for, and count with those to whom he intrusted talents; and though he is pleased with four from him who got but two, yet he will expect ten from him who received five. This may be a balancing thought to the learned rabbies, with their shining talents; to the minister of justice, and minister of the gospel, in their secular and spiritual trusts, that they have their account to make, both as private Christians and as public persons. But, my soul, thy very situation, (for thou art yet on enchanted ground,) may keep thee humble. Though thou wert spotless as a seraph, yet that flood of iniquity that swells around thee may keep thee humble; but though thou wert in the midst of a paradise of innocence, yet there is such a world of wickedness within thee, as might banish every spark of pride for ever. And when these considerations fail, and pride again begins to appear, the very appearance may plunge thee into the profoundest abyss of humility and self-loathing, out of which thou shouldst never rise, till raised to the perfection of the sons of God.

MEDITATION LXXXIV.

HARMONY IN GOD'S PROCEDURE WITH THE CHURCH, BOTH OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.

Leghorn, March 31, 1759.

WONDERFUL art thou, O Lord! and stupendous are thy ways. The harmony that prevails, and the glory that shines in all thy government fill every pious soul with adoration and wonder. All thy subjects approve of whatever the King does, and are surprised and pleased at once. Let me cast together the first and last ages of the world, and compare his conduct with the church under the law, and under the gospel, and I shall find a beautiful correspondence and agreement in all his ways.

When God would have a church to himself, he calls Abraham, and blesses him: so our Saviour, when he founded the New Testament church, called whom he chose, and blessed them with spiritual gifts and heavenly graces. When God made promise to Abraham, that Messiah should spring from his posterity, circumcision was instituted: and when the promised SEED came into the world, baptism was brought into its place. At one great occurrence, when Israel was delivered from tyrannical Egypt, the passover was appointed: and at another greater event, when Jesus, to deliver the true Israel from the bondage of sin, was to suffer, the supper was instituted. The Old Testament church had an Egypt to leave, a land of bitter bondage: and we have the kingdom of darkness to come out of, a land of cruel slavery. The church of old was composed of twelve tribes: the Christian church is founded on the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The one, though few at their beginning, grew into a great nation: the other, though small at their commencement, spread through many nations. By miracles that was delivered, fed, and defended: by miracles the doctrines of this were disseminated and confirmed. That had a sea to pass thro' at its first escape: this had a flood of afflictions at its first appearance. The former was guided by the cloud and pillar of his presence: the latter by his word and Spirit. The one had to go through a vast and howling desert: the other, to struggle through a world of sin, vanity, and vexation. That tabernacled in the wilderness forty years, and lacked nothing: this has a place given her in the wilderness, where she is fed for many days. Manna was the bodily or natural food of the first: the true manna is the spiritual food of the last. A refreshful river out of the rock followed them all the way: and to us, "that rock is Christ." To them the typical serpent was suspended on a pole, that whosoever was bitten by the fiery serpents might look and live: and we have the glorious antetype lifted up on the loftier pole of the gospel, that we may behold and be healed of all the wounds given by Satan, the old serpent. They had their feasts and solemnities: we have ours. The Jews, after all their toils and pilgrimages, subdued the heathen nations: the first founders

of Christianity, after all their trials and persecutions, subdued Paganism itself, and made idolatrous nations submit to the truths of the gospel. When the Jews were settled, and in a flourishing condition, Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked, yea, did worse than the heathen that were around them: so, after the Christian church enjoyed rest and tranquility, they turned to do worse than the unconverted nations around them. When Israel fell from the worship of the true God into idolatry, Babylon was the scourge that brought the church into captivity and bondage: so, when idolatry sprang up in the church of Christ, an apostatizing Rome, bloody Babylon, that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth, became the cruel oppressor of the church of the faithful. And as the destruction of ancient Babylon preceded the church's delivery: so the destruction of spiritual or mystical Babylon, (for the time approaches when she shall be cast as a mill-stone into the sea, to arise no more,) shall precede and promote the church's enlargement. As the Jewish deliverance was by a temporal Messiah, a Cyrus: so the Christian liberation is by the heavenly Messiah, the Saviour of the world, who shall destroy the man of sin by the breath of his mouth, and by the brightness of his coming. As our Saviour's first coming was the fulfilment of the prophecies, and finished the Old Testament dispensation: so the second coming of our incarnate God shall be the fulfilment of the promises, and finish the New-Testament dispensation. His first coming was as a Saviour, to take away the sin of the world: but his second appearance shall be as a judge, to condemn the sinners, acquit the saints, and carry them to heaven. Hasten, then, this day of glory, when all things shall be accomplished, to the entire satisfaction of every saint, and to the bright display of every divine, every adorable perfection.

MEDITATION LXXXV.

A PLEASANT CONSIDERATION.

Leghorn, April 1, 1759.

THERE is one consideration that may make me endure affliction with fortitude, and triumph in my trou-

ble, which is, That what I endure to-day, I shall not feel to-morrow. Every sip of affliction lessens the bitter cup that is put into my hand, which contains its given quantity, and is not always kept full; so the more frequent, or the more largely, I drink at a time, the less remains for me, and some time or other I must drink it all, and glut down the last drop in the expiring pang. I cannot weep over a parent dying twice, nor can I twice attend the funeral of a friend. I cannot have the shocking sight of my dearest relative struggling in the jaws of death a second time. Had I a numerous offspring, I might bury all the tender little ones once, but could not dissolve at their funeral again and again. The afflictions I feel to-day, I shall feel again no more for ever; that is, in their first onset, though they may follow up and repeat their stroke for many days.

Though the shower be heavy on me, yet, to my comfort, the clouds shall not return after the rain, to fall in other showers. And though clouds and darkness, tempest and storm, should fill my sky all the days of my life, yet after death my heaven shall brighten, and be obscured no more. My troubles diminish in the enduring, but my consolations are of another nature; they are a flowing spring, at which I may daily drink, and still they overflow. Affliction is like the foam of a river, that perishes as we pass over, and can be found no more; but the divine comforts are like Israel's stream in the wilderness that followed them all the way. The present loss of dearest relatives, which brings most pungent sorrow, would cease, were I assured that in a few years they were to rise again. Then, should it not cease, when I reflect on the certainty of enjoying my relations where spiritual friendship is screwed up to sublime heights, never known below, and that to endure for ever? I look a little further and my afflictions are no more; I look a little further, and infinite consolations are mine for evermore. Why, then, should I suffer much from any grief that passes, never to return, when pure joy, to comfort me, with mighty strides approaches, never to remove or pass away?

MEDITATION LXXXVI.

CRUCIFIXION.

Leghorn, April 8, 1759.

THERE is a reciprocal crucifixion which I should desire and seek after; first, that the world may be crucified unto me; and, secondly, that I may be crucified unto the world. This is a noble figure representing the Christians' full and free disentanglement from the world. To break the connexion, and cut asunder the bands between two persons of the closest friendship, sameness of sentiment, and oneness of interest, it is not enough that one party be crucified, for the other may still have affections and feelings after the mangled, though once amiable companion; but when both are crucified, all bonds are broken, and all ties are eternally dissolved. When one becomes noxious to society, an enemy to the commonwealth, and a rebel against just authority, then he merits such an ignominious death as crucifixion. Well, then, the world is an enemy to the life divine, noxious to the welfare of my soul, and a rebel against the authority of Heaven. Therefore I should earnestly seek to have it crucified to my affections, and my affections to it. When a person is crucified, his friends need expect no favour from him, and his foes need fear no harm at his hand. So, if the world be crucified to me, I shall neither court its smiles, nor fear its frowns. I shall expect nothing, and I shall never be disappointed; I shall dread nothing, and I shall never be in danger. He that would win heaven must crucify the world; for while the world lives in the affections, it will always roll itself between the soul and heaven. Now, what a mighty mountain, what a steep ascent is this, the sad experience of unhappy thousands can tell, who never could climb over the terrestrial globe to the heavenly land; but, intoxicated with pleasures, choaked with cares, and crushed with the ponderous mass, sink down to endless wo! Again, as a crucified man, whose extremities are bored through, and whose body is besmeared with blood, and his countenance disfigured in death, is a very moving spectacle to every feeling beholder; so the world, crucified to the believing soul, will appear vain and empty, vile and

abominable, and loathsome for the fond embraces of mental affection. And as a dead body soon becomes stinking carrion, so a crucified world, in the nostrils of a renewed soul, can send nothing up but an ill savour. All its perishing pleasures, which are rich perfumes to carnal minds, will be but like open graves to gracious souls. Finally I shall be an immense gainer by this double crucifixion; for as no man will hoard up human skulls, bones, and putrefying carcasses, for a treasure; so the world, thus crucified, and all its vanities, shall be the object of my deepest contempt and loathing; while things spiritual, heavenly, and divine, shall share my whole esteem, and enrich my soul for eternity itself.

MEDITATION LXXXVII.

ALL GOD'S WAYS EQUAL.

Under sail, April 19, 1759.

THIS is a truth at all times, and in all circumstances, to be acknowledged, that *all God's ways are equal.* Yea, they must be so, seeing he is infinite in his wisdom, excellent in counsel, free in his decrees, independent in his procedure, and holy in all his works. When Adam was in a state of innocency, all God's ways were equal in his eyes, and, admiring the wisdom of the Creator, he gave names to all the beasts according to their nature; hereby showing his own wisdom, without quarrelling at the size, shape, or end of their being. But no sooner did he fall from God, and become unequal in his way, than he complains, even in the face of God, that his ways were not equal. "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

Such, alas! is the language of my complaining at the dispensations of Providence. If adverse, I dare even go so far as to wonder how or why God deals so and so with me, so and so with his people. And because my unequal soul, that is set at war with itself by sin, cannot fathom his ways which as far transcend my conceptions, as the heavens transcend the earth, I anon conclude them unequal. Ah! foolish, vain conceit; can any thing be

crooked in the Eternal mind? Can any action deviate from the standard of equity in the Judge of all the earth? Can he be at variance with himself, who is harmony and unity? Could I glance the glorious plan in the infinite mind, I should fall down astonished, and confess, "He hath done all things well." His wisdom is the same, though I cannot comprehend it; his equity is the same, though I cannot perceive it; and his kind design the same, though I should not believe it. Although, in the death of my dearest relations, or distress of any kind, I cannot learn why Heaven deals so and so, and why the time, the place and circumstances are such and such; yet I may be assured, that there is a divine eqality in the spotless procedure; for he will never depart from the rule of rectitude to afflict his people.

But, again, what condescension is it in God, to make his people see on this side death the equality of his doings, so that they cry out, "Now I know that thou hast afflicted me in faithfulness; and it is good for me that I have been afflicted." Yet, what though such a prospect should be reserved to the day of revelations, when the vail shall be taken down, and all the ways of God shown to his people? It is enough that He does it, who is equal in all his ways, plenteous in justice, and superabundant in goodness. And though I know not the meaning of present dispensations, yet it ought to satisfy me, that he who sends them is not only the Governor, among the nations, but the Shepherd of his people, and perfects what concerns his saints.

MEDITATION LXXXVIII.

SELF-FLATTERERS.

Sailing near Sardinia, April 23, 1759.

"THE transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before their eyes;" yet they flatter themselves with false hopes, that all shall be well with them, "till their iniquity be found to be hateful" by the tremendous Judge in the decisive day.

The most flagitious persons flatter themselves, that they are not in so bad a state but that they may be sav-

ed. True; salvation is offered to the chief of sinners. But then they must be saved from sin, but cannot be saved in sin; which is the error here. Some conceive such a notion of mercy as would destroy the other attributes; as if God should trample on his holiness, truth, and justice, to exalt his mercy in saving a sinner, or in pardoning sin without any satisfaction. But this is repugnant to what he himself has declared. Others flatter themselves, that as God is just and merciful, he could never make so many rational creatures to be damned. Yet they refuse the living way God has pointed out, by which they must be saved. Others would fain believe that God will never condemn them for committing some sins, which, say they, are implanted in their nature; and thus (O horrid blasphemy!) they make the Author of their being the author of sin. But God planted man at first wholly a right seed, though he be now turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine. Others, again, there are, that through a pious education, common convictions, knowledge of the truth, and such like, are convinced that their present course of life is sinful and dangerous, but flatter themselves that all shall yet be well; for, some years hence, when they have wearied themselves in sinning, they will amend their lives, repent, and turn to God; and in this they promise themselves success, since God never refuses the penitent. Thus they set themselves above God, making themselves Lords of their own time, and promising themselves years to come, who cannot boast of to-morrow; and proprietors of divine grace, in thinking they can repent at the period of their own appointment. But such fair promises to their own conscience, who dare delay to an uncertain futurity so momentous a matter, which claims to be chief in our concern, and to be done with all diligence, are the worst performers in the world. Moreover, mournful experience tells us, that those who reserve their youthful sins to be repented of in old age, often, alas! too often, go on as they began, and die as they have lived. Again, there are some that conclude theirs an happy situation, because they are just between man and man, and upright in their dealings: They do no man an injury, they speak evil of no man; but are friendly-hearted and frank-handed to

all. But they know nothing of living a life of faith on the Son of God. Again, there are others, who, because they have given up the grosser follies, extravagances, and excessess, that were the game and the grave of their youth, and live a sober, regular life, conclude themselves to be converts, and to bid fair for heaven, though they never felt one pang of the new birth, or knew what it was to be born again. Lastly, to name no more, there are some who account themselves saints indeed, and would not question their state for any man, because they have been sober all their life long, have hated the grosser acts of wickedness, commend religion, and religious persons, and have a form of godliness; but they have never seen the necessity of being divorced from the law, and denied to their best actions, as well as their worst deeds, with respect to salvation; and, however fair their character may be, they know nothing of union to, and cummunion with, the Son of God. Therefore they are dead while they live, dead before God, though alive in their own opinion, and in the opinion of the world. Now, how fatal such self-flattery is, is evident; yet how full is the Christian world thereof! May their eyes be opened to see their danger, and their hearts persuaded to embrace the Saviour!

MEDITATION LXXXIX.

THE HEAVENLY VISION ASSIMILATING.

April 29, 1759.

THERE are a thousand unfathomable depths in divine love. Who can open the everlasting magazines, or look into these unseen glories? And this is not least to be admired, that ever the worms and potsherds of the earth should be admitted into the visions of God. Here we see something of him, though darkly, his back-part being only presented to view, and even of that we have an imperfect glance; but in the world to come, the saints shall see him as he is, and thereby be happy above their highest hope, beyond their most extensive faith.

Now, how astonishing that the saints should be admitted into the perfect visions of God! and how en-

trancing that this vision should so assimilate them to him, that the soul, accustomed to unremitting longings below for this crowning bliss, shall remain eternally satisfied with her divine conformity to God! How, then, of consequence, must the saints shine in glory, since their conformity is not to an imperfect vision, but first, they see him as he is, (and what that is, who can tell?) and then, according to this clear sight, is their assimilation to him. If here there be such an excellence in the saints, from the imperfect views of the glory of God in the face of Jesus; what must it be where the darkness is past, and the true light shineth? Surely it may be said of the saints in that state, "Ye are gods, and all sons of the highest." Nor need we wonder that John had almost worshipped a fellow-saint, who shone with so much amazing glory. This assimilation is in part begun below; for "we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed, or transformed, into the same image, from glory to glory." And it is perfected above, when the whole soul is assimilated, as far as finite can receive of communicable perfection, to him who is the Father of spirits. If a broken spirit be a burden here that cannot be borne, surely the harmony that shall arise from a sense that all the powers of the soul have put on the divine likeness, shall be ineffably sweet. Thus the whole family of heaven shall have one appearance, and prove themselves to be of one Father; and, being like their elder Brother, shall look like the children of a King.

Briefly, then, this blessed similitude to God consists, 1. In being holy, as he is holy. 2. In knowing all things to their satisfaction, as God in his infinite knowledge rests satisfied. 3. In willing, through the perfection of holiness, nothing but what is good; as God, through the perfection of his divine nature, can will nothing but what is holy. 4. In being happy in their condition, and ravished with their felicity in God; as God is supremely and eternally happy in himself. 5. In never being fatigued; they rest not day nor night, and yet are never weary; as the Creator of the ends of the earth neither fainteth nor is weary. 6. In being made kings and priests to God and to the Lamb, and reigning with him for ever; as God sits King for ever, and of his

government there is no end. And, *lastly*, In being fixed in their supreme felicity, above the fear of change, or end; as God is from everlasting to everlasting God. How complete must their happiness be, who possess God in all his plenitude, in all his perfections, and are like him in his communicable glory!

There is some difference now betwixt the saint and sinner, though both are in houses of clay; but how vast will it be then, when the one shall be all deformity and darkness, the other all comeliness and glory! For to these he shall be revealed in the nearest and most naked views, in the face of Jesus; but hid from those in the darkest and obscurest manner for ever, when "they shall be banished from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power for ever." This is the excellency of religion above reason, that it reveals God as he is! this is the happiness of the saints above sinners, that they see something of God now, and are somewhat like him, though imperfectly; and this is the privilege of all saints, that, like Moses, they may seek after, and receive repeated views of his glory. But the crowning vision is reserved for eternity, when "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

MEDITATION XC.

STILL DESCRIPTIONS FALL SHORT OF GLORY.

April 30, 1759.

Oh! what must that happiness be that is laid up on high! that glory that is reserved to be revealed! When God sets forth the bliss above, it is by metaphors, figures, and shadows, adapted to our shallow conceptions. Thus, as God himself is said to have hands, to point out his power, eyes, to show his omnisciency, and such like condescensions; so the glory above is set out to us by the most excellent things that come within our ken, as kingdoms, crowns, sceptres, gold, precious stones, pearls, anthems, life, health, liberty, light, endless day, perpetual summer and eternal autumn. But how dull are golden harps to the rapture of celestial song! How dim are streets of gold to the paved walks of glory! what are the reflections of clearest crystal, to the

bright effulgence of unclouded glories! what the languid sparklings of all the precious gems, to the noonday blaze of uncreated perfections! what are the apples of paradise, to that spiritual repast on divinity itself, which the saints enjoy above! what is a tree planted on either side a stream, to him who overshadows all his chosen ones! or twelve kinds of fruits yielded every month, to the innumerable blessings of divine love! what is a river to him who overflows eternity, fills immensity, and is the plenitude of every ransomed soul! in one word, what are all things to God! Can the creature set forth the enjoyment of the Fountain of being?

O happy period! when I shall plunge into the infinity of thine excellences, and, to mine eternal gain, be lost in the immensity of thy glory! and enjoy God in a manner that the noblest metaphors never can set forth, that the most exalted description never can exhibit, nor the most enlarged conception conceive. In view of this glory, unintelligibly great, let me prepare, and in hopes of it rest till its desirable revelation.

MEDITATION XCI.

SAINTS HONOURABLE.

Under sail, May 1, 1759.

Among the failings with which the saints are chargeable, surely this is one: Too mean apprehensions of their own greatness, though in their greatness the love of God is exalted. The poor man who has many troubles every day to combat with, and is subjected perhaps to daily indigence, would think it presumption in him to believe that there were orders given in the court of heaven concerning him by name, that necessary supply should be sure to him; and that no less than angels, who attend the throne, were commissioned to secure his safety! But since God's eternal Son condescended to come to minister to the sons of men, "and give his life a ransom for many," it well becomes the brightest of the angelic hosts to minister unto the heirs of salvation.

Truly, O saint! a serious consideration of thine high

estate, (for "since thou wast precious in his sight, thou hast been honourable,") ought not to puff up thy mind with pride, but to fill thine heart with holy admiration and wonder, and to swell thy soul with ecstacy and love! The men of the world may scorn thy mean cottage, but had they but one glance of the angelic guards that do duty there, they would conclude it to be the palace of a king, or the gate of heaven. Elisha's servant was of the same mind with the world; he thought his master was an helpless, though a holy man: "Alas! my master, how shall we do? we are undone, for we have no power to withstand the Syrian army." But, anon, he sees the mountain shining around them with celestial guards, and covered with the flaming chariots of the King of glory. Now, O saint! Elisha's God is thy God, and the standing forces of eternity are still the same, being truly the immortal legion; yea, their employment is also the same, till all the saints are brought safe to glory.

When on a journey thou puttest up at an inn, thou mayest be obliged to take the worst room, while others, who have a grand retinue, and numerous attendants, have the best lodgings; but what thinkest thou of this, that not only angels should be thy guards, but the Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods! should himself be thy watchman? How secure, then, seeing thine omnipotent Guardian neither slumbers nor sleeps! If, under thy earthly sovereign, thou art called to the martial plain, thou mayst pitch thy tent in the open field, while the general of the army fixes his splendid pavilion in the centre, yet only men encamp around him; but wherever thou pitchest, "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about thee." What, then, should thy conduct be, O thou art highly favoured of the Lord! Thou shouldst study holiness in the highest degree, in gratitude to him who deals so with thee; and humility, that thou mayest never forget thyself, and so cease to wonder at the heavenly condescension! Is it thy part O saint! when so honoured, so defended by the King, to hold disloyal conferences with his implacable enemies, self, sin, Satan, against whom the "Lord hath sworn that he will have war for ever?" When he, in redeeming grace, has raised thee up to heaven, wilt

thou through sin debase thyself to hell? Now, O saint! thou art no less happy, and thy condition no less grand than this. Live, then, above the world and its vanities, with a greatness of soul that evidences thy divine descent, till the day come, in which thou shalt be exalted to that glory, of which thou art now an expectant, candidate, and heir.

MEDITATION XCII.

MERCIES, THOUGH APPARENTLY DELAYED, COME AT THE APPOINTED TIME.

Alicant Bay, May 2, 1759.

How is it that thoughts rise in my mind about the promise proving abortive? or how can I conclude that the delays of Providence are ill-timed and unkind? Yet God, notwithstanding all the risings of unbelief in my breast, is punctual to a day. Hence says Moses, that God brought forth the children of Israel in the "*self-same day*" that he had promised, and that their sojourning in the land of Egypt was completely expired. But what a groaning time did the poor Israelites undergo! Their service was with rigour, their bondage was bitter, their oppression unsupportable, and the cruelty of their foes had arrived at that infernal pitch, as to plunge their helpless males into the river! At length, in this melancholy time Moses was born; but this sad season was spun out till he was forty years old, before he hinted to his brethren that he it was that should deliver them. Yet this faint dawn of relief immediately disappears; Moses is no more to be seen or heard of in all the land of Egypt, and the night of sore affliction is protracted for another forty years. Now, what cogitations of heart, may I suppose, struggled all this time in the breasts of Jacob's sons, in the breast of Moses! Well he knew in what deplorable circumstances he had left his brethren, nor knew he how their bondage might be increased in his absence; yet, in the account of their glorious deliverance, he confesses that God was a God of truth, and that, however he seemed to delay, still his suffering people were brought forth from

the iron furnace at the appointed time, and not a day later than the promise.

Have I, then, any reason to complain of days and months of delay? No; God has appointed a set time, and at the set time will remember me; and it well becomes me, though the time should seem long in my view, to wait with patience for it. God has in all ages so dealt with his people for the exercise of their graces: And these trials, like the instruments of the husbandman, breaking up the fallow-ground of their heart, make them bring forth a plenteous crop of precious fruits, whence accrues an increase of glory to God, and unspeakable joy to their own souls, through the ages of eternity! and is not this more than all that can rise from the present and speedy performance of the promised blessing?

Then sit still, my soul, and calmly wait the end, wondering more that justly-deserved judgments are not immediately executed against thee, than that expected blessings are for a while withheld.

MEDITATION XCIII.

THE WORLD DEEP-ROOTED IN THE AFFECTIONS.

Sailing near Malaga, May 9, 1759.

How often, when reading the history of the children of Israel going up out of Egypt, have I condemned their longing for the flesh-pots, and other things wherewith they had been entertained in the land of their bondage, when they had Canaan before them! But now I may turn from them, and leave my complaint upon myself, since guilty of the same sin. If my hopes are fixed in eternity, why take I pleasure in the things of time! Will I by profession seek after immortality, yet practically pursue dying vanities? O! when shall the world cease to allure me, cease to find reception in my soul? When shall the beautiful field, while I behold the better country, become as a barren wilderness to me; and the fine flower garden, as the top of a rock that is neither plowed nor sown? When shall honor be to me as disagreeable as the din and confusion of great cities, and fame as the tumultuous noise of an enraged mob,

when the most part know not wherefore they are come together? When shall my well-informed judgment esteem riches no better than wild brier, whose single flower a-top is attended with innumerable prickles round about below? When shall I possess unenvied solitude, and retire into mine own breast, counting it an happiness neither much to know, or to be known, in a vain, a transitory world? Can an old man, who is half blind, and half deaf, be delighted with the harmony of sounds, the neatness and richness of attire, and the frolicsome amusements of youth? and should not the growth of grace, (how sad my condition!) give a greater disrelish to the pleasures of the world, than the decays of nature? Henceforth may I use the world as not abusing either it or myself! How would it look in one sent express from his prince, on matters of the last importance, to sit down by the first pleasant grove he came to, and forget his dispatch, till the night had wrapt him up in darkness, when he could not pursue his journey? So I am on the express of salvation, by order of the Prince of the kings of the earth, who has commanded me to run while I have the light, and work while I have the day; not to quit my pilgrim-staff, ungird my loins, or forego my travelling posture, till got within the veil; nor to let my affections sit down on any thing below, lest the shadows of the everlasting evening be stretched out, and thickest darkness cover me! As men look on children, in all their gay imaginations and sportive jollity, with pity and disdain, so should I look on the grandeur of the world, which is more so, in comparison of diviner glories, of sublimer bliss.

But, when Israel came near the promised land, the pleasant inheritance, there was not one word of Egypt and all its dishes; so, as a sign that I am drawing near the better country to inherit it for eternity, let the things of this world not once be named by me, as becomes an expectant of the vast reserve of love. O happy day! when all shall be tasteless and insipid but Christ; when this struggle between my carnal desires and renewed affections, shall issue in complete victory over the creature and its enchanting charms.

MEDITATION XCIV.

TRUE RICHES.

Gibraltar Mole, May 20, 1759.

WHAT, saint! dost thou complain of poverty? Dost thou cry out of want? If thou art poor in any thing, it is in thy views and apprehensions of thine inheritance, they are so shallow and confined. But, as God said to Abraham of his seed, so says he to thee of thy possessions, "See if thou canst count them all up." Knowest thou the measure of thine inheritance, or the breadth and boundary of thy kingdom? Survey the midnight-sky, and see the sparkling orbs above, these are all thine own; and if they can advantage thy soul, and bring about thy good, not one of them shall be withheld from thee, seeing thou art the King's son. Now, how rich art thou, if, as philosophers say, every twinkling star be a sun to dependent orbs that form their system? Canst thou, then, be cast down for a footbreadth of this world below?

"But, Oh!" repliest thou, "you would not talk at such a rate, did you know my troubles. Heaven is conscious that I am daily groaning under poverty and affliction, and that my thoughts are divided and distracted, while fear of miseries at one time assails me, and at another time hope in his mercy composes my mind: While now I would fain have confidence in the promise, and then am all anxiety about the providence. Now, if it were as thou sayest, why is all this befallen me? why is it thus with me?"

What, saint! thinkest thou that the promises are illusive words, or that God speaks ironically to his people? No, but with the sincerity of a true friend, with the affection of a tender father. It fares no otherwise with thee in all thy complaints, than with a young heir to a great estate, who is fed sparingly, and put under severer discipline than others who have not such great expectations. He is not able to comprehend the meaning of such hard usage, till he grows up, and then he finds himself possessed of a regular appetite, a fine state of health, and a vigorous constitution, as well as of an extensive inheritance, which gluttony and licentiousness in younger years might have destroyed. So

thou, O saint! when grown up to the measure of a perfect man in Christ Jesus, (for while in this world thou art but of yesterday, and knowest nothing,) thou shalt see the excellent use of afflictions, and the noble design of keeping thee at a poor table of uncreated comforts, lest the satisfying of thy carnal appetite had sent leanness into thy soul. Then all his ways shall be made plain, which must remain unriddled till the mystery of providence be opened up in the light of glory. All things, then, are yours; and the earth and the fulness thereof, sun, moon, and starry heavens, are but the least part of thy possession, who has a right to the bright and morning star of eternity, to the Creator of the ends of the earth, to God Almighty, as thy shield and exceeding great reward.

How like the Possessor of heaven and earth art thou! for as this is his footstool, so the woman, (the church in all her members,) that is clothed with the sun, has the moon, (the earth,) under her feet! Why, then, anxious about a possession on that which is not only God's footstool, but should be thine? Wouldst thou appear in all thy state while in the desert, the land of thy pilgrimage; since the better country, where the King of glory has his royal pavilion and residence, lies before thee to be inherited? Thine eyes may climb to the stars, and say, These are mine. But why terminate there? Faith may rise higher, and claim him who counts their numbers, and gives them all their names. O how at once thy possessions grow too vast to be described, and extend infinitely on every hand! God, in all his glorious perfections, reconciled in his Son, who is appointed heir of all things, is yours, and you are his! Why, then, be disquieted about dust and ashes, wind and vanity, when the unseen realities of eternity are before you, and shall give the purest joy, and most refined pleasure in the eternal possession?

MEDITATION XCV.

THE CASTING OF THE SCALES OR BALANCES.

Gibraltar Mole, May 26, 1759.

THERE is a real difference between the righteous and the wicked, for the one is the heir of bliss, the other

the child of the curse. But O how is the appearance misrepresented and inverted in the eye of carnal men! The wicked are accounted happy, and the saints the most miserable of all men. But let us fight the worldlings with their own weapons. The wicked, as the world continues not, (this they must all confess,) are travelling through the evening twilight of declining grandeur to the darkness of eternal night. But the saints, as the world to come, for which they wait and hope, is permanent, are marching through the growing beams of morning light to the perpetual noon of glory. Truly, now-a-days, the wicked seem to have the right hand of the just, and their rod lies heavy on the back of the righteous; but they shall be found on the left hand in the day when distinctions most avail, and over them shall the upright have dominion in the morning. The one may go mourning, and pour out their complaint before God, while the others spend their days in mirth, and rejoice at the sound of the organ: but the sorrow of the one shall be turned into everlasting joy, while the songs of the other shall issue in eternal howlings.

Great men weigh valuable in the balance of the world, while the saints are accounted as the offscouring of all things; nevertheless, in the balance of the sanctuary, when both are weighed, the sinner shall be found wanting, but "the precious sons of Zion shall be comparable to fine gold."

Now, dare I calculate with the world, and call them happy whom the world counts happy? Or, more daring still, dare I choose to be where happiness, sacred happiness, is not to be found? However beautiful the evening be, it is soon black night; but however cloudy the morning be, it is soon broad day. So it was with Dives, who, dragged from his luxurious table and flowing cups, is plunged into the lake, and lifts up his eyes amidst devouring flames, parched, and petitioning for one drop of water to cool his scorched tongue; while Lazarus, full of sores, and without attendance at the inhospitable gate, except the kindly dogs, is wafted by an heavenly band from all his sorrows, to the bosom of the friend of God, and set down to banquet richly at the table of eternal love. Surely, then, my choice shall

be to live in their humble, die in their hopeful, and rise to their happy condition.

MEDITATION XCVI.

AFFLICTION THE COMMON LOT OF THE SAINTS.

Gibraltar Mole, June 3, 1759.

When I consider the conduct of Providence towards all his saints, I should rather be astonished that I am permitted to pass through the world not more chastised, than take it amiss that I am chastened, every morning. And surely, were I free from afflictions, whereof all are partakers, I might infer, that I were a bastard, not a son. Whatever be my affliction, the wisdom of him who sends it should make me embrace and bear it without a grudge. Though it springs not out of the dust, nor comes at random, yet man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward ; and even some of his favorite ones have, for wise ends, had the severest afflictions. The wisdom of God, however, in afflicting his people, is folly to the world, who would compute love and hatred by common providences ; and therefore they cry out, as the ignorant Jews of old, to the Captain of our salvation, who himself was made perfect through suffering, " Let him deliver them, if he delighteth in them."

Again, as the infinite goodness of God shines in sending afflictions, though the scales on mines eyes hinder me from seeing all their beauty, insomuch that I often wonder why it fares so and so with me, and would fain essay to swallow up all in submission and faith, believing the veracity of the promise, that all things shall work together for good to them that are the called and chosen of God: I say, as his goodness appears in sending them, so the divine wisdom is conspicuous in their variety. Abraham, the friend of God, had a trial which would have startled the whole world of believers. Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise ; Moses the man, and Aaron the saint, of God ; Joshua and the Judges ; Job, David, and his royal line ; Samuel and the prophets ; yea, the Lamb and his Apostles, had afflictions of every kind, in substance and estate, in relations and

connexions, in name and character, in soul and body. Now, such has been the conduct of God these five thousand years with his church and people; and had not this government of his house been both for his own glory, and the good of his people, such a wise Father, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, would by this time have changed the manner of his procedure towards his own. But who can doubt the wisdom and goodness of his conduct, who considers, that thro' this discipline many thousands are gone to glory, and are this day happy in their joyful harvest from their weeping seed-time?

How happy is it for me that the world often gives me the slip, that I may forsake the world, and look more out for the better country:—That men often prove false to me, that I may rely only on the God of truth:—That wants beset me on every side, that I by faith may set myself down at the gate of heaven, and, in the promise, and in his fulness, find a rich supply:—That death now and then cuts off a relation, that I may more remember mine own end, the immortal world, and him who is the resurrection and the life. Affliction renders the creature tasteless, the world barren, and dispels the intoxicating juice of carnal pleasures and sensual delights. It breaks the sleep of security, and awakens and rouses up to duties. Even the saints themselves are more frequent and fervent in their devotions under the rod of affliction; and many in trouble visit the throne of grace, (dear throne! to which all have access,) and pour out a prayer when his chastening hand is upon them, who before were utter strangers both to the place and the employment. I verily believe the whole church of the first-born are children of the cross, and have drunk of the cup of affliction, sweetened by Christ's drinking so largely of it. Now, would I go another way to heaven than the redeemed have trode in? Would I walk Zionwards out of the King's high-way, out of the covenant? However much in the dark I may be about particular providences, and singular afflictions, till all things are cleared up above, yet, in general, I shall welcome whatever may loose me from this world, and bring me nearer God.

MEDITATION XCVII.

THE GLORIOUS FRUITS OF SANCTIFIED AFFLICTION.

June 4, 1759.

Two things render affliction either easy or intolerable, to wit, its kind, and continuance. If it be ponderous and crushing, and withal continual; this makes affliction break all the bones, and wound the very spirits. But when it is light and over in a moment, which is the case with all the afflictions that befal the sons of God, I wonder why or how I can complain. But how astonishing beyond expression must it be, that this light and transitory load of affliction should work for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!

Truly I have no reason to cry out of my troubles and trials, since they work more good for me than now I can conceive. And little do I think, while grappling with my afflictions and fears, what they are procuring for me in the highest heavens; God having so connected the seed-time of tears with the harvest of glory, that they who sow weeping, shall reap with everlasting joy. Would I grudge to carry a stone for a day or two, if assured that when I laid it down, I should receive a crown of gold? Why, then, repine under my afflictions?

But, again, what proportion is there between the cross and the crown, the trial and the triumph, the affliction and the comfort, the burden of grief and the exceeding weight of glory? No more than between the glorious Giver and glorified receiver. Here our afflictions own the creature as the instrument, and sometimes have their origin in imagination; here they are light, and they are transitory; but the glory above is massy and weighty, is permanent and eternal, and is the immediate gift of God, neither by nor from the creature.

Moreover, affliction works for our good, even here: For, (1.) To the saints, it bears, as it were, its own reward in its bosom, yielding to all that are rightly exercised therewith, the peaceable fruits of righteousness. It deadens the pleasures of sense, and gives the soul a relish for spiritual things; yea, it divorces the soul from the creature, and draws it near to God. (2.) There is no proportion between all that can befal the saints in

this state, and that joy wherewith they shall be comforted in the better life. In none of the sons of men do all afflictions meet at one and the same time; Job's case came nearest it, but at all times he had the exercise of his reason, and the testimony of a good conscience, with an invincible faith in God, which made him conquer even while he seemed to fall. The afflictions, then, of saints, are verily light; but their future glory is a weight filling every power, replenishing every faculty, overflowing the whole soul, and satisfying every desire. Now, in all the sons of God, the heirs of glory, every heavenly gift, every blessing of love, every degree of felicity, every beam of glory, centers, meets, and rests for ever. Therefore, there is no proportion between their sufferings and their consolation. (3.) Affliction is of no continuance; the apostle elegantly expresses it by a moment, which of all times is the shortest. And indeed though the affliction were severe and very ponderous, yet this lightens it much, and that it is over and gone in a moment, no sooner felt than fled, to return no more; but the exceeding weight of glory, to screw up their felicity to the highest degree, is also eternal.

But some may think, How can affliction be thought either light, or but for a moment, since, for their part, it is all they can do to support under the pressure and weight of their many adversities? And as to their being over in a moment, they rather think with Heman, "that they are afflicted, and ready to die from their youth up;" or, with Asaph, that they are "plagued all the day long, and chastened every morning."

But, as to the first, no afflictions befal the saints that can destroy their frame, though they may dissolve the union between soul and body. Yea, though the outward man be crushed, and seem to perish, yet it is to our advantage, for thereby the inward man is renewed day by day, and grows up in strength unto eternal glory. And this mitigation arises from the divine sympathy of him, who in all their afflictions is afflicted. Moreover, how often does the joy that God pours into the soul, in the time of affliction, overbalance and downweigh all the sorrow that arises from them.

And, as to the second complaint, of continuance; as a moment bears no proportion to one's life, so our

whole life bears no proportion to the eternity of glory which shall take place, when the hour-glass of time has not a sand left, and cannot be turned. A moment stays not, and when gone cannot be remembered; for even millions put together make but a duration, which, when past, is only like a tale that is told. Now, life consists of so many moments, therefore a moment bears some proportion to our life, though very small; but eternity is not composed of life-times or ages, therefore the whole life bears no proportion to eternity. That which endures but for a while may be divided into the smallest denomination, but what continues for ever cannot be broken down into numbers. Now, is it much to pass through the shallow stream of affliction, that can rise but to the ankles, in order to plunge into the pleasures of his right hand, which are a great river, even waters to swim in? Can any child of heaven quarrel with the kindness of God, who makes light and momentary affliction work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?

Take courage, then, my soul, and be strong; look into God's dealing with thee, for his ways can stand the strictest search, as through them all, even in the afflicting hand, fatherly kindness and eternal love shine forth. Now I see what I never saw before, that afflictions sanctified are indulgences, and trials the special gifts of Heaven. And I do not wonder that all the saints are, I say not punished, but privileged with them, of one kind or another; since they here keep sin low, and for them accumulate eternal weights of glory in the other world. My not looking into the ways of divine wisdom, and to the extent of the promises, has made me have very odd thoughts of afflictions; and, concluding them to be the signs of divine displeasure, I have been ready to question my interest in God, and difficulted how to understand the word of truth. But now I see, that though sometimes he sends afflictions to chastise his saints for sin, and curb their carnal affections, (and how kind is it thereby to punish sin, and prepare them for glory, and glory for them!) yet, that at other times he sends them to improve the soul, and exercise every grace in his saints. Why, then, do not I, like the great apostle of old, glory in tribulation, which, where grace

is in exercise, sets all the wheels of the soul in motion; tribulation working patience; patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope, being no way ashamed to confess her confidence in him who has shed his love abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, gives a heavenly boldness. Should I then be disconsolate, because some fogs dwell on the eye-lids of everlasting morn, which, when the sun arises, shall never more be seen? Should any shades in this early twilight give sorrow, which are to be swallowed up in the brightness of eternal noon? A little patience, and I am past every one of my troubles, and possessed of all the transports of perpetual day.

Even from the vastness of my affliction and sorrow here, solid joy may rise; for if affliction sometimes almost crush me, and I am sometimes like to fall under it, ought I not to consider, that this weight of glory shall far, very far, exceed the present burden? Now, if the one be so much, how much more, infinitely much more, will the other be! Yea, it shall be such, that were I not replenished with immortality, and upheld by the Most High, I should fall under the insupportable emanations of divine glory. But I shall be all might for that happy state, where, to my sweet experience, I shall learn, that my light afflictions, which was but for a moment, wrought for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!

MEDITATION XCVIII.

GOD HIS PEOPLE'S INHERITANCE.

Gibraltar Mole, June 6, 1759.

THE priests in Israel were allowed to approach nearer to God than others, and were enriched with many excellent privileges; yet these favourite ones were to have no possession in the land. Was this because he loved them not like the other tribes, or would show himself unkind to his own? No; it was because he loved them extremely, and would give them no less than himself for their inheritance. Why, then, should it seem hard to me to have little or nothing in this world, who have such a possession as the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth?

But, replies repining Incredulity, "These priests were secured of the tythe, and a certain portion of their sacrifices; now, had I only sufficient for an honest livelihood, I would seek no more." Ah! wicked fears, impious doubts! Is it not in the power of the same Lord to furnish two tables alike? They fed at his altar, at the table of his offerings, that they might ever be present with him. Was not this kindness? I feed at the table of his providence, that I may daily make my prayer to him, "Give us this day our daily bread," and depend upon him. Is not this kindness? Is not the one as sure as the other? A bad season made a thin harvest, consequently the tythe was less. The provider is the same Lord, the promise is the same truth, and all things are still in the same hand.—Now, how agreeable and becoming is it, that such as are a peculiar people, a chosen nation, a royal priesthood, as all his saints are, should be deprived of these creature-enjoyments, which might deprive them of nobler privileges, and more spiritual possessions! It is the wisdom of those that would dwell near God, to be divorced from the world; but since this, in the greatness of our folly, is not our choice, it is good in God, in his infinite wisdom, to confer such kindness on us, as it were against our will; thus keeping us empty-handed of worldly possessions, that we may accept of himself, the better inheritance.

He that is not, though deprived of all things, not only pleased, but transported with this promise, "I am thy possession, I am thine inheritance," has no notion of bliss, nor could the whole world bestowed on that man make him happy. Oh! consummate madness! so to mistake between imaginary and real, shadowy and substantial, transient and eternal things! for this world at best, (the experience of all mankind will prove it,) is but a common under the curse; but the divine inheritance contains fields of glory, paradises of bliss, rivers of life, oceans of love, scenes of pleasures, heavens of ecstacy, yea, in a word, the plenitude of God.

MEDITATION XCIX.

DISTANCE DIMINISHES VIEWS.

Gibraltar Mole, June 8, 1759.

THINGS at a distance seem vastly less than what they really are. The lofty hill that affords a noble prospect at the foot, lessens so, while we recede from it, that in a little it seems no larger than a mole-hill, and then sinks out of sight.

Now, how true does this hold of spiritual and eternal things! What narrow notions and confined conceptions have we of the world to come? Nothing but the eye of faith, through the telescope of revelation, can glance this after-state; but how often do mists of ignorance darken the eye, and clouds of unbelief obscure the glass! Hence the intuition is often interrupted, and the view at best falls very far short of what it shall be, when faith resigns to vision in the day of glory. What a perverse opinion have we of the celestial paradise! It is so distant from our sight and affections, that we are apt to think the garden of God no better than a barren desert, and that there is neither fruit nor flower in all the heavenly Eden. We think nothing of the hosannas of the higher house; nothing of the howlings of the lowest hell. What unconcerned views have we of the wrath to come! of the glory that shall be revealed! We dwell at such a distance from the throne of grace, that we are little benefitted by the healing beams; and the throne of glory is so far distant, that we behold but little of the heavenly splendours. Alas! like children who peep through the wrong end of the prospect-glass, we conceive a future world to be of no great moment, and we set death at such a distance, that it is almost out of sight! But, were our glances rightly guided, we should believe the one to be all our concern, and behold the other as always at the door. The sun that lights the world, by his great distance appears to us only as a small globe of fire; but, were he as near as the clouds, his vast bulk would make an august, an awful appearance; and wherever we should roll our eye, it would be all one firmament of fire! Even so, how little do we see of him who kindled up the sun, and lighted all the stars! Though he be not far from every one

of us, yet we see him not, who is all things in all! But when our eye is spiritually enlightened, we shall see him in all things, in heaven above, and on earth beneath; in creation and providence; in the scriptures of truth, and in the Son of his love; in the heavenly hosts, and in the church of the first-born; in his own perfections, and in every power of the soul.

No wonder that religion appears ill-favoured and ugly to the men of the world who have never taken a near look of her countenance and charms. But the nearer we live to the Saviour, the more of his loveliness we shall see, and be the more enamoured: and the more we exercise ourselves in religion, the duties thereof will still be the more amiable and engaging. Now, if glory at this great distance, (for what can be more removed from each other, than time and eternity, this and the other world?) be so desirable, so divine, whose very foresight sheds an heaven into the soul, which rejoices with exceeding great joy, in hope of the glory of God! what must it be, when possessed to the full? If the numbered drops that water the fields below be so refreshful, what must that overflowing fulness be in the regions above, that satiates and replenishes the soul? If the Sun of Righteousness shines so bright in the firmament of grace, through all the clouds, where he is but beginning to arise, what must his clear, his unclouded beams be in the firmament of glory, where his meridian is eternal? If this bliss, this happiness, this life, this joy and glory, be accounted by us, while little known, immense, excellent, and infinite, what must it be, when beheld in another light, possessed in a higher capacity, and enjoyed to its extent!

MEDITATION C.

JUBILEE.

Gibraltar Mole, June 12, 1759.

Every thing that was written of old was written for our instruction, on whom the ends of the world are come. Now, Israel, when redeemed from Egyptian bondage, had both a sabbatical year appointed them, and the great Jubilee. The first was every seventh

year, that not only weeks but years might have their sabbath; and the last when a week of sabbatical years was completed. There was also an ambulatory release, (if I may so call it,) respecting every individual, when, after six years service, the man-servant and maid-servant were set at liberty.

All these Israel, by divine command, observed; and though their deliverance from Egyptian bondage was thereby commemorated, yet it respected a much diviner and more interesting liberty. By one the land was to rest; by another the labourers were enlarged; and by the third the lawful heirs returned to the inheritance of their fathers. And may not this prefigure, that wherever the gospel is believed, the land that reeled to and fro, that was moved exceedingly, because the transgressions of its inhabitants were heavy upon it, is favoured with a kind of rest and repose, in comparison of those places where the beams of the house, and the stones of the wall, cry out to one another? Again, is not here prefigured the deliverance of individuals from the slavery of sin, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God? And, lastly, is not here shadowed out the salvation of the whole world, from the ignorance, idolatry, and darkness, that had overspread all nations?

But though the Jews had both their sabbatical year, and great jubilee, yet they could not be made perfect without the gospel-dispensation. Therefore, all their grand epochas were only typical of "the acceptable year of the Lord," when the great High Priest of God, with the trumpet of the everlasting gospel, proclaimed liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison-doors to them that were bound, not only through all the land of Israel, but to the ends of the earth. It was not strange, that the saints who lived in the times of types and shadows, without us, should not be made perfect; but it is strange that the saints who fall asleep in Christ, and so have past their week of trouble, and entered on the year of release, on the sabbath of rest, (so graciously has God connected things,) though possessed of all felicity, cannot, without us, who are expectants of the same state, be made perfect; as their souls wait for the resurrection of their bodies, that the whole man may exalt and enjoy him, who is very God and very man.

Now, though the seventh year was very pleasant and divine, yet the jubilee in all respects excelled it very far, being proclaimed with loud sounding trumpets to the ends of the land, inviting the captive to liberty, and the impoverished heirs to their paternal estates. But the jubilee of the glorious gospel darkens description itself, being glad tidings of great joy to all people, and a general proclamation to disinherited spendthrifts and bankrupts to return, through their elder Brother, who has redeemed the mortgaged inheritance, to the full and ample possession of spiritual things, of which they shall never be again despoiled. But the grandest and most glorious jubilee of all, is the jubilee of glory, when the great trumpet of eternity shall be blown, and the saints, who now seem outcasts in the land of death, shall hear and assemble, and enter into the full possession of the everlasting kingdom. In this great and last jubilee, all former deliverances shall be summed up, so that there shall be no after-mortgaging of the inheritance, as might take place among the Israelites, no fears of being dispossessed of the land of promise, which often vex the Christian's breast.

The blast of the ram's horn was heard all over Israel, the sound of the gospel all over the world; but the last trumpet shall be heard in heaven, earth, and the grave; so that the saints in all ages shall be equal sharers in this jubilee that shall end their sorrows, and begin their joys. Then shall they enter, not into a sabbatical year, that can be succeeded by time, but into a sabbatical eternity, even an eternal Sabbath of rest that shall never have an end.

MEDITATION CI.

GOD'S KNOWLEDGE.

Under sail, June 14, 1759.

How do we admire a man that is a little wiser than ourselves! Yet the wisdom of all the human tribes, of all the angelic hosts, is but folly before God! in whose infinite knowledge all our thoughts are laid open, all our conceptions are swallowed up. How divinely glorious is his universal knowledge, that extends to all!

Man cannot know or retain every thought that has flowed from his own heart, every word that has dropped from his own mouth, much less those of his neighbours. But it is not so with God; not a man on either side the globe but he has his eye on, not a thought but is brought forth in his presence, not a whisper but pours into his ear, not a work but is wrought before him; and all these things are for ever with him. How must the mortal judge examine again and again the criminal, and the witnesses, and yet sometimes be doubtful what sentence to pass! But every thing is naked and open to him with whom we have to do. He presides over every purpose, guides every step, terminates every action, and governs every individual. What amazing knowledge is this, that not only kingdoms and provinces, in their several revolutions and changes, but persons in their particular occurrences and circumstances, are minutely overruled by him! Now, how many must the actions, the words, and the thoughts be, of so many millions of men, that are at one and the same time acting, speaking, thinking; yet all are known to him as clearly and distinctly as if there were but one person in the whole world. Nor is the far greater part or number of men that have departed into the world of spirits, some in pleasure, some in pain, less in his knowledge. Neither does his knowledge and concern about the human race diminish his care of the irrational tribes; for he feeds the young ravens that cry from the top of the rock, and the lion's whelps that roar from their dens, and kindly makes grass to grow for the milder inhabitants of the field. Every insect, which vain man in a manner despises, is both produced and preserved by him, and crawls in his omniscient ken, who sees and sends the juice through every fibre of the vegetative family, gives the flowers their rich variety of colours, and plants their various virtues. He disposes of the infant-nations that are daily born into the world, to supply the daily loss of that equal number, whose countenance he changes, and sends them to their eternal home. By him the falling hairs of our heads are numbered, and the dead sparrows are not forget before him. The trees of every forest in every land, are green at his command; every pile of grass and fragrant flower, every bud and blossom, every seed and root, every fruit and leaf, grows

and fades, flourishes and withers before him. Heaven and earth are open to him, death and destruction have no covering. The drops of the clouds, and the dew of heaven, he numbers, and the billows of the vast ocean pass under his hand to be told.

Now, how perfect must his knowledge be, when all things present are so perfectly known to him, and are still as clearly in his knowledge when past and gone, as when present; as they also were in the same perspicuity known to him from eternity, before ever they existed. Nothing is past or to come in his knowledge; in an unintelligible degree of perfection, all is for ever present.

From the above shallow thoughts of his infinite knowledge, how should I learn to admire God, to walk as ever in his eye, and to inscribe on all my ways, "Thou, God, seest me;" and to rejoice, because he that sees disposes of me according to his wisdom!

Moreover, though the heavens and their inhabitants; the world of mankind, dead, alive, or to be born, in all their thoughts, words and actions; the animal, reptile, and insect creation, in all their motions and changes; trees, plants, flowers, and whatever else exists, were to have an addition of other heavens, and other worlds, filled with intelligent inhabitants, and this addition continued till space were in a manner replenished, and conception overpowered by the tremendous augmentation; yet, even when thus thoughts, words, actions, were multiplied almost to infinity, still every thing would be as clearly, plainly, and distinctly known to him, as if only one angel, one man, one insect, or one atom existed. Hence, we may understand how infinite his power must be, which is of the same extent with his knowledge, as are all his divine attributes, his holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; And, in a word, O saint! what may the joy of thy heart be, seeing his love to thee is of the same extent and duration!

MEDITATION CII.

THE SABBATH.

Mediterranean, under sail, June 16, 1759.

God, that his chosen ones may never go too far from him, has bestowed many privileges upon them, and

among the rest hath given them his Sabbaths. Though the world regard them not, but pollute them with all their sinful pleasures, yet surely they are the refreshing of the serious soul; days much to be regarded unto the Lord; for on this day the redemption of God's Israel from the bondage of sin, from the gates of hell, was declared to be completed by the triumphant resurrection of the Lord of glory. The Author of time has dignified this day with his benediction, and given us his divine example to rest from all our labours on this holy day.

God, in all ages of the world, has honoured the Sabbath. On it he would be worshipped publicly, and would allow nothing to encroach on this day, which he claimed for himself. On the seventh day he called up Moses into the mount, while thousands waited below, to instruct him about the church under the Old Testament dispensation. He was also pleased to divide the longer extent of time into Sabbaths, that as every seventh day was a Sabbath, so every seventh year should be sabbatical; and, by a week of sabbatical years, were the revolutions of the glorious jubilee marked out, which gave gladness to the whole land. Likewise, under the New Testament dispensation, on this sacred day God began to reveal to his servant John what should befal the church to the end of the world. As he delights more in the gates of Zion than in all the dwellings of Jacob, so he displays more of his glory on this than on any other day. For many poor souls has he prepared of his own goodness on his own day; and on this day he will be waited upon, and inquired of, by the house of Israel. This day is like the dew of eternity watering the barren fields of time, which makes God's plantation grow; but the wicked, who regard no Sabbath, are like the tops of ragged rocks, on which, though softening showers descend, and refreshful dews drop plentifully down, yet are not one whit the better.

To rightly exercised souls, every Sabbath is a precious type of the desirable resurrection; for as the body in that rises from the dust of death to immortality and life, from a bed of corruption to spotless perfection, and from a separate state, (for death divides soul and body,) to perpetual communion with God in Christ,

being itself united in the harmony of all the parts and powers of the whole man, to feel distraction no more; so in this day, the soul, when kindly visited of God, has its resurrection from the gulph of carnal cares, into which it sinks through the week, where many rot, and never see a resurrection; and from spiritual death to the glorious immortality of faith, when, with the apostle, we can say, "We live, yet not we, but Christ lives in us; and the life we live in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God." When we thus enjoy communion with God, the soul may be said to be, not only united to the body, but to have all its powers and faculties in union and harmony among themselves; but when we depart from him, we are divided and torn asunder with a thousand anxieties, and, till we return to him, never become the perfect man, the complete person; we have our bodies among the living, our souls in the congregation of the dead; an awful contrariety to a natural death! The Sabbath is also a foretaste and earnest of the eternal Sabbath of rest that is reserved for the saints above.

This divine day should be prepared for while approaching, sanctified when present, nor forgotten when past. God, as our Creator, we should remember, who sanctified the seventh day; as our Redeemer, who changed it from the seventh to the first day of the week, when he rose triumphant over death; and as our Judge, who, ere long, will swallow up all these passing refreshings in an eternal Sabbath of rest. This day, which God has so often honored with his appearance, not only to the disciples of old, but to the souls of his saints in all ages, should be honored by every one that bears the Christian name. This is the day in which Zion's courts are thronged, and in which, in his temple, every one talks of his glory. On this day the church-militant approaches nearest to the church-triumphant, who go up to his house with joy, to mingle their hosannas to his exalted name; to whom, thus met in his sanctuary, he vouchsafes to show his stately steps of majesty, and the manifestations of his glory, whereby his saints are strengthened to hold on their way through this howling wilderness, till the everlasting Sabbath dawn, and rest eternal be their portion.

MEDITATION CIII.

ELIJAH AND ELISHA; A DIALOGUE.

Under sail, June 17, 1759.

When the Lord would take up his dear servant Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, which was known, at least to all the sons of the prophets, the pious Elisha attends his venerable master, and, when desired by him to stay behind him, protests that he will not leave him; he says not till death part them, but conscious that Elijah was to ascend to bliss as Enoch had done before, he is determined, if he may not enter in with him, yet to attend him to the very gates of glory. When the reverend seer sees the firm resolution of his promising pupil, he desists, and proposes what he would desire of him as the last office of kindness he could do for him before he should be taken from him. The one having mentioned, the other having replied to the petition, they continue the divine dialogue, and walk on in expectation of the parting moment. And well may we conclude, that the subject was of the sublimest nature between such great souls, and at such a period. Might we suppose the conference thus?

Elijah. My dear Elisha, thou art now attending, with joy and sorrow mixed, thy aged master through the last stage of life. I am not, like other men, expiring on a death-bed, but am to be wafted to the other world without the separation of soul and body, and in a little thou shalt see me no more.

Elisha. O! then, my master, my father, let our converse be about the glory of the better country into which thou art soon to enter.

Elijah. It already refreshes me; the heavenly gale blows into my soul, and sheds a joy divine: To-day shall I behold his face in glory; a glory so exceeding great, that I cannot describe it, but only pant after it.—Let him come and take me to himself.

Elisha. What, pray, are those transcendent excellences of the heavenly inheritance, that make thee so desire it?

Elijah. The bliss above is unbounded, pure, and permanent. The joys are transporting and divine. There God is enjoyed through his Son the Messiah, who is

to assume our nature, suffer for our sins, take away our iniquities, and win eternal life for us; whom all the sacrifices hold forth, all the types, washings, and sprinklings represent, and put us in remembrance of; to whom all we prophets bear witness; and there our seeing him shall make us like him, and change us from glory to glory.—Divide, ye heavens, that I may enter in.

Elisha. Does it create no uneasiness in thy breast, to leave the world, thy relations, and other concerns in it?

Elijah. Truly the world is to me as barren a waste, as wild a desart, as ever the wilderness was to our forefathers: And as to relations, as I got and found them from God, so I give them back, and lose them in God, who is himself to me all in all. Other concerns in the world have I none, but the Israel, the Zion of God, to whose protection, I commit her, who will be a wall of fire about her, and the glory in the midst of her; to whom, (though but few in my days have kept from bowing the knee to Baal,) "a seed shall do service, and shall be accounted to him for a generation." Yea, to leave the world makes me leap for joy, for sinners shall no more create me sorrow, and I myself shall henceforth cease to sin. There I shall join the church of the first-born, those that are written among the living in Jerusalem; and then, O how shall I sing to the eternal name, and never cease, and never tire! My bliss shall know no bound, my rapture no restraint, my gladness no alloy, my day no night, my sky no cloud, my light no shadow, my glory no decay, my praises no interruption, my delight no cloy, my strength no weariness, my subject no diminution, my pleasures no period, and my eternity no end.—Eternity! let it just now begin.

Elisha. O how should I rejoice to enter with thee, though through the dark passage of death, into that triumphant state!

Elijah. A triumphant state, indeed! where God dwells in the full display of his glory, and where, (not as below,) the holy of holies stands eternally open for all the worshippers of God, who with freedom enter in. Trouble is debarred the seats of tranquility, and pain the regions of immortality. No passion disturbs the soul, and perfect love casts out all fear; and there the glories of Immanuel enlighten the unbounded extent of

paradise. My dear Elisha, in a little you would not know your aged friend Elijah! Now I am wrinkled with age and sorrow, as you know I have been jealous for the honor of my God, who is now about to translate me to his ineffable glory; but then a smile, known to none but the inhabitants of bliss, shall sit down on my countenance for eternity, and make my face shine as an angel of God. O the hidden treasures of eternity, that glorified saints possess! O the vastness of that glory which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man conceived, that waits to be revealed! I stand on the borders of the heavenly Canaan, on the confines of eternity, and glance at all that glory which in a little shall be mine. With transport I shall enter his temple, where every one eternally talks of his glory. I pant for the approaching opportunity to prostrate myself before the highest throne, wholly dissolved in love. —Let the hour shorten into a minute, the minute into a moment, and the moment be no more!—It is done! The heavens divide, the fiery chariot, quick as lightning, rolls:—My blessing on Israel, on Zion, on thee, my dear Elisha.—Welcome, my only Lord God:—Heaven opens round about me, glory overflows me, and the transforming beams infold and bear me hence to everlasting day.

Elisha. "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!"

MEDITATION CIV.

THE COMPANY OF THE WICKED CORRUPTS.

June 19, 1759.

UNDER the law he was polluted who did touch any dead carcass, or even his bed who had a running sore, and was to wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. Now, if thus that which only represented sin defiled under the ceremonial law, how must sin itself, the source of all uncleanness, every where defile! Alas! I have reason to fear, that its pollution be more permanent than for a day. And as he who was every whit sound himself was rendered unclean, if he had but touched, though unawares, the bed where-

on he who had the running issue lay; so am I defiled, not only by sin rising in mine own breast, but by hearing and seeing the sin of others. For the corruption of my nature is so great, that I am ready to catch the contagion; and if I do not detest, hate, and abhor it, as I should, then am I polluted by it.

How pernicious, then, the presence of the ungodly! How are these spiritual, these greatest fools to be avoided, whose companions are sure to be destroyed! How gloomy that company, and how disagreeable to enter into it, where God never comes, where his glory never shines! Surely grace rather needs oil to support its flame, than water to extinguish its fire; but water is all I can expect from the wicked. O! miserable man, who hast no other to walk with thee by day, no other to talk with by night, none else to deal with abroad, or to discourse with at home! Yet, out of the world we must go, unless we have intercourse with the men of the world. Let that, however, be only in the common affairs of life, let it be dispatched with little expense of precious time, and without contracting an intimate acquaintance with them, unless in view of doing good to their immortal souls; and still, may the saints, the excellent ones of the earth, be the chosen companions of my life.

Hitherto, alas! I have been ignorant of my danger; for the wicked are ever casting arrows, fire-brands, and death, in their sporting with religion, and trifling with a world to come, and among such madmen must I not be wounded? Hence, let me every day, that the filth may not cleave to me, bathe myself in the righteousness of the Son of God by faith; and purge my daily walks, (which, like the flesh under the law, is apt to receive the infection,) by sincere repentance; that, at the evening of my life, I may not lie down polluted in the grave, and rise in the morning of eternity with the putrefaction of sin.

MEDITATION CV.

TO ESCAPE WRATH SHOULD SILENCE UNDER ALL AFFLICTIONS.

June 20, 1759.

When I revolve a thought or two in my mind, I wonder that ever I can have a downcast countenance for all that can befal me in the world. To be delivered from wrath, and destined to glory, is a composing, a silencing thought. When I have the tooth-ach but for one night, and keep tossing and tumbling from side to side with the excruciating pain, how long the night appears! But what, then, must the everlasting night of wrath be, that eternity of wo? Had I a due sense of divine vengeance, I should think myself happy in the midst of my bitterest afflictions, if I might entertain the sweet hopes of being delivered from the wrath to come. Dare I, then, complain of the chastisement of a Father, who have made myself obnoxious to the irrevocable sentence of an angry Judge? Am I displeased that in providence he sits as a refiner, when in justice he might be a consuming fire to me? Can I cry out of passing through the fire and water of affliction, when he might set me up for his mark, cause his arrows to enter into my soul, and the poison thereof to drink up my spirits through eternity? Should I complain of trouble and pain, who deserve to be tormented day and night forever and ever? Dare I be disconsolate under the loss of relations, who might have been chained through all ages with the fraternity of devils, with whom I had joined in rebellion against God? Alas! what shall I say? I own that I cannot condemn myself according to my guilt.—What can come upon me that I can complain of, when delivered from the wrath to come? Could I look into the burning lake, and see the tortures of the damned, how should I bless the most miserable condition of the world, and embrace the bitterest afflictions, if sweetened with the hopes of escaping that place of torment? But, if faith, divinely bold, on solid grounds, can even refuse to quit with her claim to the heavenly inheritance, what in the world can make me miserable? To be delivered from everlasting flames, should afford me a lasting joy in the midst of every sorrow. Has Je-

hovah dealt so kindly with my eternal duration, and will I, dare I, for very shame, quarrel with his conduct of my few moments of time? The griefs that vex are short lived, but the anguish he has rescued me from is everlasting. Under all my temporal adversities, it should make me silent, that I shall not roar out under his avenging hand for ever. And it should turn my murmurings here into a song, that I shall not howl hereafter. He that escapes out of his house when on fire, will not much mind stumbling on a stone in his flight, so, if I escape the wrath to come, no matter though my way lie over thorns of trouble, and briers of adversity. The soul that is delivered from the pit of corruption, should with pleasure walk the rough way of affliction towards the paradise of God. Moreover, he that brings out of hell, and bears to heaven, cannot but bless by the way; he can even bless with crosses, (flesh and blood cannot believe this,) benefit with adversities, enrich with losses, and nourish with disappointment and pain. Therefore will I, without reserve, roll over on him the transient moments of my life, to be distributed as he pleases, since he hath rendered my eternity happy, that passeth not away.

MEDITATION CVI.

ADOPTION.

Under sail, June 23, 1759.

Every true Christian is a free-man; and while the rest of the world are very slaves, the saints are kings and priests to God and the Lamb. They are all sons of the Highest, and no relation comes up to that of sonship; for though the servant may remain long in the house, yet he "abideth not in the house for ever." Noble progenitors are the pride of the world, while every one boasts of his high birth, and great blood, as Pharaoh's counsellors of old: "I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings." But when, in Christ, we can say, "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know, that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is," then we may boast an heavenly descent.

No beggar would refuse to become the adopted son and heir of a rich man; but none so poor as men in their natural state, and none so rich as God. What a non-such blessing, then, for foundlings and outcasts to be made the sons of God, for bankrupts to be made the heirs of bliss! But, what madness in them to contemn the heavenly privilege! What are all our contendings about rank and pedigree, which must end in corruption, and terminate in dust? It will nothing avail us, though royal blood run in our veins, unless the Spirit of adoption be sent forth into our souls, whereby, with the voice of faith, we may cry, Abba, Father; and know, as a fruit of this divine privilege, what it is to go with freedom to so near and compassionate a relation, who, being both wise, good, and tender-hearted, will never give evil things to his children.

But, O! how should the adopted one, the son of God walk, and behave according to the character of the divine family, whereof, in free grace, he is made a member! The cross events of our terrestrial pilgrimage will often scatter a family far and wide; but once a son, always a son in the celestial and invisible society, and always in the Father's presence. When adopted into this relation which aggrandizes, the honour is not only divinely glorious, but the privileges ineffably great. Though they come not within the glance of the carnal eye, yet they are not, on this account, the less real. Possessed of them, the poor saint, whom the world perhaps disdains to notice, may survey, with grateful songs, the extent of his felicity, the vastness of his bliss; and may tell with triumph, "God is my Father, Christ my Elder Brother; afflictions and chastisements the signs of my Father's love and care; heaven my reserved inheritance; glory my future portion; life and death, things present, and things to come, are all mine."

What empty sounds are all honorary titles to this, "sons of God!" How poor to be the heir-apparent of a crown, to the solid expectation of eternal life! Surely the child of adoption is the happiest man in the world. Angels, these superior beings, are even ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation; and whoever injures them is said to "touch the apple of God's eye:" a figurative, but most expressive speech, as there is no part

so tender as the eye, and no part of the eye so precious as the pupil, or apple, which we defend from danger with the greatest care. Such an one has a right to all the privileges of the sons of God; and what privileges will not such a Father, whose affection is infinite, and his power unbounded, bestow on his sons? Whoever rises against them, offends the whole family of heaven; for, "he that despises you," says Christ to his disciples, "despises me; and he that despises me, despises him that sent me" And if the command is given to guard one chosen soul, suddenly is he surrounded with the chariots of eternity, and horses of heaven, terribly glorious in their fiery majesty!

It is true, that now the adopted sons of God are like grandees dwelling *incognito* in a foreign land. Their pedigree is not known, their grandeur is not seen, and therefore their station is neither admired nor coveted. But, there is a day coming, when all the sons of God shall make their glorious appearance in one majestic throng, in the sight of an assembled world, who shall be ashamed that ever they spoke so highly of the men that were but sprung of the earth, and so meanly of those that were born from heaven. What beauty shall shed itself round about them! They shall be clothed in robes of glory, with palms of victory in their hands, and the charter of the covenant, containing all the privileges of adoption, spread before them, and an august proclamation shall be made in the hearing of men, angels, and devils, "These are the sons of the living God."

Now, if I be received into the royal family of heaven, let me break off correspondence with the King's enemies, sin and vanity, and show the great soul, the refined sentiment, and elevated thought, in hating what he forbids, however sweet to the carnal mind, and in choosing what he commands, however cross to flesh and blood. If he is my Father, let me honour and reverence him, who will never be terrible to me as a Judge. Let me receive correction at his hand, and the law at his mouth; and let me prove myself to be one of the celestial family, by speaking the language of the better country, and having my affections fixed above; to be adopted in truth, by loving every one that seems to be

adopted. Let me remember my former deplorable condition, and be humble; my present privileges, and be thankful; and my future hopes, and be holy in all manner of life and conversation. And let me daily wonder at that love, and adore the sovereignty of that free grace, that puts hellish brats among the sons of God, and enriches them with so many privileges; privileges which contain not only what is good in this world, but the glories and felicities of the world to come.

MEDITATION CVII.

CONNEXIONS.

June 24, 1759.

IGNORANT mortals are always rash in their conclusions on the conduct of Providence, being blind in their views, and impatient under woes. But, to compose my combating thoughts, and make me wait the issue of all things with patience, let me look into some remarkable scripture-narratives, and see the fair sun-shine of kindness, after the storms of trouble and clouds of indignation are gone.

First, then, let me look into that which befel the friend of God. Think what joy filled the patriarch's breast when promised a son in his old age, and how this joy was increased when the promised seed was born, circumcised, and grew up to be a pretty boy, the joy of both his parents. But, look again, and see the amazing temptation, the tremendous scene that ensues! The promised seed must be sacrificed, and that by the hand of a most affectionate father! Yet, see his aged joints tremble all the way to Mount Moriah, to offer up his beloved Isaac, as it were resigning the promise again to God, trusting God to make it out some other way, though it were by raising him from the dead. Now, let us view the beginning of the trial of his faith; how dark and gloomy, how opposite to reason, affection, and religion too; but, let us connect the latter end with the beginning, and all at once is beautiful and bright. There his faith is tried, here it triumphs; there God commands, here he commends his obedience: There he requires, here he restores Isaac: The voice of God

at first seems to strike at his former promise, here it confirms all with new promises, enlarged blessings, and this glorious name super-added, "The father of the faithful." Abraham comes home full of gladness and gratitude; and we have the divine account, to teach us to wait the end before we draw our conclusions of God's providential way.

The second is the account of Joseph. In the first part of the scene, see his young heart ready to burst and break with bitter anguish! Hear his many, but fruitless supplications to his cruel brethren! How melting are his cries, while his hard-hearted brethren draw him out of the pit, to sell him for a slave! Nothing can save him; compassionate Reuben is not within the reach of his cry. The price is agreed upon, the money is paid, and away he must go; and neither his parting importunities, his piercing cries, nor piteous back-looks, can move them to relent. Moreover, after a little advancement in Egypt, he is thrown from the liberty of a servant into the confinement of a prison. This at first sight is a melancholy scene; but if we look to the sufferings of a tender-hearted father, it is heightened to the highest pitch. All his sons and daughters gather around the grey-headed mourner, to comfort him, but in vain; for still he thinks he sees the wild beast tearing his beloved Joseph in pieces, who screams out for help, but none to help is near; and then he is like to faint through the excess of sorrow. Now, this is the first part of the Providence, which indeed has a very dejecting aspect, and if we had never heard more of the matter, we would have concluded them both very miserable; but let us see how the dear connexion stands. Jacob, who had mourned many years, is at last overflowed with tides of joy. Joseph, the lost, the long-lamented Joseph, is still alive! The youth who was sold into Egypt as a servant, has all Egypt at his service! He who had his feet hurt with fetters, may now bind princes at his pleasure, and teach senators wisdom! He who lately drudged about in a dungeon, to attend prisoners, becomes a father to a king! His brothers, who envied him for his dreams, bow before him, as the accomplishment of those very dreams which bred their envy! He whose life they so

little valued, saves the lives of thousands; and at his word, whose supplications his brethren would not hear, all the land of Egypt is governed! The long separated relations meet, and melt in kindness on one another's neck!

We have, (not to name others,) a similar instance in the great apostle Paul, and by his own observation too, in his epistle to the Philippians. This great man, after his singular conversion, preached Christ unweariedly in many trials and sufferings; till, at length he returns to Jerusalem. There by the enraged and unbelieving Jews he is set upon, and would have been slain, had not the Roman captain rescued him; but he is so persecuted with their cruel rage, malice, and underhand dealings, that he is compelled to appeal to an heathen emperor. Now the great apostle of the Gentiles, to the great grief of the church, is a poor prisoner; hence says he "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ." He is a long time confined in Judah, then sent to Rome, where, though shipwrecked in his passage, he arrives, and is kept two years a prisoner at large. But, says he to the Philippians, "I would not that ye should be ignorant, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel, so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places. And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." How noble the connexion! Paul intends to visit Rome at his own expenses, to preach the gospel there; but Providence, on the emperor's expenses, brings him to make converts, not only in the royal city, but in the very palace. The Jews think they have succeeded to their very wish, when they have thus got rid of a pestilent fellow, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes; but they could not have fallen upon a better method to spread his doctrine, and support his cause. To appearance, his success must end, when his imprisonment begins: but it is quite the reverse; not only Paul persists in preaching the gospel without prohibition, but the brethren wax bold.

What reason, then, have I to complain on the first part of Providence, while the outer wheel is only seen?

Should I not wait till the inner wheel turn round, and I can read plainly the last connexion? And what though that should be reserved for eternity? There every providence shall be completed to mine everlasting comfort, and all things concerning me connected in the most beautiful harmony. There shall not be the least gap in my lot or life, when time is no more; but all things shall be made up to me in Christ Jesus, to the entire satisfaction of my soul.

MEDITATION CVIII.

DEGREES OF NEARNESS TO GOD.

Under sail, June 25, 1759.

THERE are different degrees of nearness to God, which the saints enjoy. One of these is essential to the very being of religion in the soul; namely, when the alien to Israel's commonwealth is brought near to God, through the blood of Jesus, and, of a foreigner, made a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God. But, another and higher step is the special indulgence of Heaven to some saints, and but at some times. In the nearness of faith, (for none that have true faith can be far from God,) I walk with God in the duties of religion: In the nearness of sense, he walks with me in special manifestation of himself, of his love, and his glory. The one is sure and satisfying; the other is sweet and comforting. Without the approaches of faith, I cannot expect sensible communion; but I may have the first, when the last is withheld from me. The one is my daily allowance from the King's table, without which I could not live, but the other is my sitting down at the table with the King, to the feast made by him, for the joy of his chosen. The one makes me obtain the victory over the world; the other makes me weary of the world. The former is the King's highway to heaven; and in the latter, I walk on it in the sun-shine of his presence. The one gives a continual relish of spiritual things; the other, a refreshful foretaste of heaven, a prelibation of glory. In the first, I have access to God in all my perplexities, that I may not despair; but I am favoured with the last

only at times, that I may not presume. The joy of the first excels the worldling's gladness from all his abundance, as far as light excelleth darkness; but the joy of the last is akin to the joy of saints in glory. In acts of lively faith, the world is to me but dung and loss, for the excellency of the glorious object; but in near access to, and communion with my Lord, I would fain put off corruption, put on immortality, and become an inhabitant of the world above. O how does a beauty beam on my soul, in the few moments of communion, as if heaven opened before me, and eternal day shone full in my face! What sacred joy prevails within, and how am I refreshed in every power? Though the Christian must not build on them, since without them his soul may live, yet they are not, as scoffers would affirm, delusion, enthusiasm, and such like; for always after this divine intercourse, Christ is dearer to me, self more loathsome, sin more odious, the world more vain, religion more pleasant, my affections more refined, my desires more on spiritual things, and heaven more desirable.

But now, if a pleasure so great, of which we can only conceive while we enjoy it, spring from a few moments communion in a more glorious way than usual, (for every saint has communion with God,) how divine is a religious life! And what a tragical scene is the most pleasant life of the happiest sinner, compared to this! And, in a word, what must the life of glory be, where communion, of another nature than ever known below, shall be the privilege of all the heavenly family! where God shall shine in all his glory, and shed abroad his love in every glowing heart! and where it shall be the ineffable bliss of every ardent adorer, to see more and more of his goodness, and approach nearer and nearer to God, in the uninterrupted freedom of rapturous communion, through an endless evermore!

MEDITATION CIX.

UNBELIEF.

Lying to, off Toulon, June 29, 1759.

Few, I believe, read the history of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, passage through the Red Sea, and

daily miraculous provision in the wilderness, on the one hand, with their doubts, quarrels, complaints, murmuring, and rebellion, on the other, but are ready to cry out, O hard-hearted Jews! O unbelieving Israelites, to doubt in the midst of such a glorious display of divine goodness! Well, then, I verily believe that no Christian ever lived any while below, but one time or other had providences exercised toward him in such a manner as forbade him any more to doubt. Therefore, we may convert our cry against the Jews into a complaint against ourselves, and condemn our own unbelieving hearts, that can, in the midst of so many exceeding great and precious promises, under the sun-shine of so much tender mercy and loving kindness, cry out, I perish, I perish!

How horrid, how hateful, and how hurtful a sin is unbelief! It spits in the face of the promise, and accounts the faithfulness of God a lie. It forgets all the great things which God hath done before, and despairs of ever seeing again the like displays of divine power. It heightens the calamity, doubles the distress, and concludes deliverance impossible. As the prayer of faith opens heaven, so the despondence of unbelief shuts it. It starves the soul, and disturbs sweet tranquility of mind. It musters fears, multiplies enemies, and says, like Solomon's sluggard, "There is a lion in the way, I shall be slain." As strong faith glorifies God most, so great unbelief dishonors him to the highest degree. It binds up the very arm of God, who cannot, who will not do many mighty works where unbelief prevails. It draws death out of the book of life, by gathering up the threatenings, and passing over the promises. As the most perfect degree of faith, which is assurance, is heaven begun below, so the highest degree of unbelief, which is despair, is hell begun in time. How daringly does it contend with God, and dispute the matter with the Most High! Says God, "Put me in remembrance," to wit, of my promise; but says unbelief, "Thou hast forgotten to be gracious, and in thy wrath hast shut up thy tender mercies." Says God, "Remember what enemies consulted against thee, and what enemies answered, that thou mayest know the righteousness of the Lord;" but says unbelief, "This evil is of the Lord,

why should I wait for him any longer?" Says God, "I have blotted out your sins as a cloud, and your iniquities as a thick cloud;" "No," says unbelief, "they are marked before thee in a book, for the time to come, for ever and ever."

Now, shall I harbour such a monster in my breast, that would turn my whole soul into confusion? Shall I circumscribe that power that has often displayed its glory in my deliverance? Shall I deny the merits of the sufferings of the Son of God, or the virtue of his blood? Shall I be afraid that his grace be not sufficient to strengthen me for the performance of every duty to which he may call me? It is not only ungenerous, but sinful, to entertain thoughts so detracting from the glory of God, and so destructive to mine own soul. Henceforth, let me be strong in the faith, giving glory to God. Let me lift mine eyes from growing difficulties of every kind, on every hand, and look to God; so shall the mountain become a plain, and over the stream of affliction I shall go dry shod.

But why condemn Israel and not myself? The God that did those wonders, is the same with whom I have to do. As I believe them to be true, I am as much bound to believe him, as they were who saw them, seeing he changes not, nor faints, nor is weary, and since his care over his church and saints is the same in all ages. And though I am not to expect miracles, by which he confirmed the church to himself in those times, yet I am with as great confidence to depend on that God, to whom miracles are as easy as the common course of nature, as if I were governed by the interposition of miracles. Let me not, then, myself commit what I condemn in others, but learn spiritual wisdom from spiritual folly? Yea, how egregiously guilty shall I be if I retain a transgression in my right hand, for which I have seen in the sacred records, men so awfully punished, and with which God has shown himself so highly displeased! And no wonder, for unbelief strikes against God; whatever the language of other sins be, still this speaks against God, even in every murmuring whisper! Against his faithfulness, as if his promise might not be depended on, nor his record received; against his power, as if it could not perform

and bring to pass; his wisdom, as if he could not foresee; his providence, as if he could not protect, defend, provide; his counsel, as if he could not direct; his mercy, as if he had no compassion; his conduct as if he could err; and, in a word, against all his glorious perfections, as if he were not God.

If my unbelief respects my sin, I look more to the demerit of my transgressions, than to the dignity of the divine redeemer, that taketh away the sin of the world. Now, as the Creator is infinitely greater than the creature, so the Saviour, who is Immanuel, God with us is infinitely above the sinner, and from eternal wrath can save to the uttermost all that come to God through him. It is but cruel unbelief at the bottom, however I may pretend to put honor on the holiness of God, when I say that my sins are too atrocious to be satisfied for by the death and sufferings of our incarnate God, too black to be washed away by the blood of the Lamb of God.

Again, if mine unbelief respects the affairs of this life, I measure omnipotence by my weakness, infinite wisdom by my folly, and God by myself. So, when I am nonplussed, I think that God is so too, else why should I be disquieted in any condition, were not my thoughts of this detestable stamp, seeing he can redeem out of all distress? Then let me look, in all cases and afflicting circumstances, beyond the appearance, above the probability, yea, above apparent impossibilities, to God alone, and I shall never repent my confidence, nor be ashamed of my hope.

MEDITATION CX.

OUR SHORT LIFE SHOULD NOT GIVE MUCH CONCERN.

Gulf of Lyons, July 3, 1759.

My mind is like a piece of ground, which, being over-run with weeds, no diligence can render quite clean, no care can keep them from appearing again, even after they have been plucked away. Surely so it fares with me and my sinful anxieties. They are ever springing up anew and troubling me, and nothing will utterly and entirely destroy them, till the ground be turned up by the plough of death, and left fallow till the resurrec-

tion. Yet, that I be not altogether barren and unfruitful in the work of the Lord, let the busy hand of faith be ever plucking up the base weeds of noxious unbelief.

Again, why am I so much concerned about a world I am so soon to leave? Were my possessions to fall on this side Jordan, and I to inhabit here for ever, what more could I do than I have done, and am doing? Yet I am but a stranger, a sojourner, and a pilgrim; here to-night, but gone to-morrow, to return no more. Yea, this night, what dare I boast of to-morrow, not knowing what the silent watches of the night may bring forth? and if not of one day, far less of many, may I boast. It is but a look, and I have lost sight of this world eternally; why then set my heart on that which shall one time or other so terribly deceive me? A few moments, and my eternal state is begun, and I am naturalized in the world of spirits, and dashed out of the roll of the sons of Adam, yea, out of the remembrance of all my nearest relations! Should I, then, mind much what entertainment I meet with by the way, if I may make an happy journey's end? The traveller ought to think more on his home, than on his usage in his way home. Surely, one should be ready to think, that men carried their riches to eternity with them, yea, and were more welcome on that account, or why these unwearied endeavors, and perpetual bereavings of rest, to obtain them? O folly! O fear! O faithlessness! Folly, that I concern myself with moments, and neglect eternity: Fear, that I should be distressed about a day, which scarce has dawned till done, and dwell not with joy on ages to come: Faithlessness, that I should doubt the promise, yea, the appendix to the promise; for salvation from sin, and eternal life, is the promise, and all things that respect this life are only appendixes thereto; as if he who is faithful in one thing, and the only thing, could falsify in trifles.

Now, though my whole life were one continued scene of affliction, yet the very shortness of it might sweeten it. Though it be a vapor, a shadow, a wind that passeth away, surely the attending calamities can be of no longer continuance, than that duration upon which they attend. Nothing can pass from this world to that, but my disembodied immortality; yea, the painful remem-

brance of my troubles and present distresses, shall cease when I am swallowed up of everlasting joy. I see, then, that my concern turns on a wrong hinge, and my care terminates on a trifle. All my concern should be, not to provide for the few moments of a transient life, but to improve for the glorious ages of an endless eternity. And that care which in despondency I expend on the vanities of time, how to be possessed of them, I should lay out in piety, on the treasures of uncreated glory, how to prepare for the divine possession. Well may I commit to him the bearing of my charges by the way, who has adopted me for his son, and made me an heir of his kingdom, to which I am travelling home.

My time is become less since I began to write, and soon it will be wholly gone; how foolish, then, to give myself present disquietude about time to come, which I may never see! But I am certain of eternity Therefore, into grateful admiration at those approaching glories which I shall there possess, I should convert my ungoverned lamentations over the present gloomy aspects of time, and keep silence in the composing exercise of faith; remembering, that he had never a bad day, who had a good night; nor a miserable life, who died the death of the righteous; nor his time full of agony and grief, which ended in an eternity of glory!

MEDITATION CXI.

FAITH.

Gulf of Lyons, July 7, 1759.

Faith is a divine grace, and the very life of the soul below; hence we are said to "walk by faith;" and if our lives are spiritual, it is by the faith of the Son of God that we live the spiritual life.

It is a strange definition of faith given by the apostle to the Hebrews, yet divinely true, "Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;" that is, though we can only hope for those felicities and glories which are future, yet faith in its glorious acts, can suck the honey and marrow out of them, so as to supply the soul even in the present time, with the substance of that which is still future; and, by

refreshful foretastes of bliss, bring the brightest evidences of celestial excellences, which are not visible to flesh and blood. Thus, by the first-fruits of glory, the soul is ascertained of entering into the land of promise. Faith is begun vision, or seeing things at a distance, and through a glass: Vision is faith finished or perfected, and seeing things at hand, and with the naked eye. It is the bond of union between God and the soul, which can never be broken by all that can befal us in the world; "for this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." And he that believes in God endures all things, as seeing him who is invisible, and waits for the brighter, the diviner views of glory.

Faith is a mutual inhabitation. It is Christ in the soul; hence says the apostle, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," and the soul in Christ; hence we are said to "put on Christ," and, being dead to the world and to sin, to have our spiritual life hid with Christ in God. Faith bring to God the greatest honour, and to the soul the greatest happiness; as unbelief does the opposite of both. Faith accounts him faithful who has promised, and composes all within; while unbelief makes the God of truth a liar, and sets the whole soul in all her powers and faculties, in an uproar. Faith has won its victories, wrought its miracles, and done wonders in the world; "for to him that believeth, all things are possible." And a warrantable faith never fell short of its expectation; yea, often has the goodness of God gone beyond the faith of his saints.

Every thing for which I pray in faith shall be granted, and mountains become a plain, and seeming impossibilities disappear. Yet I am not to pray for impossibilities; for though to God all things are possible, yet I could not pray in faith, (and whatsoever is not of faith is sin,) for things I am convinced I have no warrant in the word of God to seek or expect; such as, for the sun to stand still, water to flow out of a rock, seas to divide, and rivers to part asunder; though all these things have been done. Again, I am not to pray for or expect things to be done in a miraculous manner for me, when, in the common course of providence, whatever I want can be bestowed on me. I am not to expect the heavens to drop down manna to supply my daily neces-

sity, or that my clothes should wear forty years without waxing old; but I am to believe, in the midst of my wants, that I shall be every day supplied in a greater or lesser degree, as seems meet to God, by the same liberal hand that showered down the manna in the wilderness; and perhaps in a manner that shall convince me of his special care, and confirm my belief of his singular favour, as much as if the drops of rain were turned into bread for me. His exercising his providence in providing me in raiment anew, should be as endearing to me, as if he exerted his power in keeping what I had from waxing old. But, if I am shut up in some circumstances, where, as far as I can see, nothing less than a miracle can deliver, then faith is to believe the miracle, rather than doubt the promise, or distrust the power of God, as if any thing were too hard for him.

But, how comfortable is it, that when I pray, with submission to the divine disposal, only for warrantable things, in faith, I may be assured that I shall both be heard and answered! but, if I doubt, then unbelief overturns all; and this is the reason why I cannot prevail. How terrible, amidst my petitions, to doubt if God be able and willing to perform my request, when he has declared himself in the affirmative in both! When I do so, I turn the great God into a mere feeble creature, in denying his power, and, (O horrid!) into a liar, in thinking that he has no intention to perform his promise. I see, then, that I should make my petitions with submission, leaving it wholly to God, what he will refuse, what he will chose for me; but that to doubt his love, his power, his faithfulness, is a heinous sin;—his power to perform to the extent of the promise, either as to spiritual or temporal things;—his faithfulness, that he will perform whatever he has promised;—or his love, which, so to speak, waits and longs for the fittest opportunities when his glory and my good may be most advanced in performing the promise for me. Now, as his glory rises, so should my felicity, as I should count it all my happiness to have his glory set on high.

Faith, then, is a triumphant grace. By its wrestling Jacob prevailed, and Jacob's wrestling sons still prevail with God. It always wins the day, secures the

blessing, is never sent away empty; will not, cannot be said nay. And by this boldness and confidence of faith, which is the gift of God, God is greatly glorified. Faith looks above created opposition, dwells in eternity, and hangs on the omnipotent arm of God. It wraps itself up in the promise, and cannot be divided from it till it be performed in every respect. It is not terrified at storms, nor disquieted by disappointments, but looks beyond the storm, above the disappointment; rests on the compassion, and fastens on the faithfulness of its glorious Author and Finisher. Faith stretches beyond the narrow confines of time, and takes broad views of the world to come; takes a tour through the land of bliss, the Canaan above, and converses with eternal ages. Faith, looking to the Promiser, sees the way of duty plain; while fear cries out, "There is a lion in the streets, I shall be slain; danger and difficulty in the way, I cannot go." Surely, to him that believeth, all things are possible; but to him that doubts, a mole-hill becomes a mountain. In after ages, I shall be ashamed of my fears and unbelief, but never of my faith. Henceforth let me be strong in the faith, with submission;—make my requests with resignation;—pray in the confidence of being heard;—and believe all things with patience and composure.

MEDITATION CXII.

THE THREEFOLD STATE.

Gulf of Lyons, July 8, 1759.

THREE changes go over the natural world, the black and dark night, the fair and beauteous moonshine, and the bright and noon-day beams: The same also prevail in the rational world; there is the black and dark night of a natural state, in which the unconverted nations sit; and there is the fair moonlight of grace, in which the saints walk till admitted into the eternal sunshine of glory in the highest heavens. Night sat on the face of the deep at first, till God said, "Let there be light," and scattered the eternal darkness with his manifesting ray. So every soul is not only in darkness, but darkness, itself, till made light in the Lord; and this darkness

would be eternal, did not the divine beams break in upon the soul, and dispel the awful gloom.

There is a vast disproportion betwixt those nights which are overcast with thick and heavy clouds, when the moon shines not, and not a star appears, but the angry heavens open in tremendous thunders, as if about to convey our destruction from the chambers of the sky, while the glaring lightnings, only like so many torches, flash, to make our funeral more solemnly dismal, and those nights when not a star is hid, but in the beauty of the full-faced moon, which sheds a day in comparison of the former night, through the serene æther, on the silent earth, where not the least breath of wind is felt, nor the least confusion heard. But the disproportion is still greater between those that remain in their natural state, and those that are renewed in the spirit of their mind. For the poor sinner is in perpetual fear of being consumed by the angry thunders, and devoured by the wrath of the Almighty; nor is his case less deplorable by his insensibility, for he shall at last be awakened with a vengeance, when he shall find his misery consummate, without any possibility of redemption. But the happy saint has a whole heaven shining on him, all the divine perfections smiling in his face, every thing around him quiet, and every thing within tranquil; nor can afflictions of any kind, or of any quantity, or any continuance, deprive him of this peace that passeth understanding.

Now, we have this pleasant moon-light properly from the sun, being part of his emanations received by her, and reflected on us: So all the beauties and excellences of grace are like so much divine glory seen through a glass, or reflected on us from the word of truth, the ordinances, and sacraments, by the operation and blessing of the Spirit of all grace.

Again, if we only enjoyed nights, beauteous by the unclouded moon and transparent sky, and knew that this light was from the sun, how would we long for day, to be delighted with beholding that bright orb! Yet I very much question if we could conceive of the sun according to that transcendant brightness whereby he illuminates the extensive sky. We might conceive him to be beauteous like the moon, and a vast deal larger, but could never form any just idea of his fiery beams, insufferable rays, and sparkling effulgence, too bright

to be beheld by our weak eyes. Even so, while so many excellences, and so much beauty, are to be found in sacred things, in religion, in the ordinances, in the sacraments, in the church, and in the saints of God, here in this day of grace, which is all but a part of Immanuel's glory reflected, how divinely bright must the Sun of righteousness shine above! What amiable beauty! what assimilating beams! what adorable perfections! what august emanations! what entrancing delights! what majesty and splendour shall pour from him above! Our thoughts recoil on us, and our apprehensions fail, when we think on his infinite glory. This created sun, which we so much admire, would disappear in the presence of one of his remotest rays, as happened when Paul was converted.

What brightness, what effulgence, what emanations, where he sheds around all his glory! No cloud, no eclipse, no mist, no decline, no setting, to lessen his eternal blaze? Surely, now our thoughts are in the dark about this Sun of righteousness, and Fountain of glory. When admitted to perfect vision, we shall find, that our clearest apprehensions and brightest uptakings of him below, differed but a degree from ignorance. How ineffably, how unconceivably glorious must he shine above! when on the blessed beholders round the throne, life descends in every ray, assimilation in every beam, transport and delight in the eternal emanations of all his divine perfections!

How is it, then, that when I have seen something of the beauty of grace, I have not more desire to see all the excellences of glory?—to turn about from the reflective glass, and see him face to face?—to scale the wall behind which he stands, and see him as he is?—to change the transient glance into an eternal intuition of him in his glory?—How is it that I do not watch with more anxiety for the morning-light, and look out more eagerly for the dawning of eternal day? Is night to be preferred to noon? or created joys to the pleasures that overflow in the divine presence? Finish, then, thy work with me, and glorify thyself by me, before I go hence and be no more. Then, through the same grace shall I say, and with the same sincerity as it was at first spoken, "I have a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better."

MEDITATION CXIII.

CORRUPTION.

Gulf of Lyons, July 9, 1759.

HAPPY they who have put off, not only mortality, but sin, and have put on, not only immortality, but perfection, and, in triumph, trample on the neck of all their enemies, having neither foe without, nor foe within. But my daily complaint may be, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Satan watches and way-lays me; temptation attacks without, and corruption rises up within, and, alas! too often I offend him who is all love, mercy, and goodness. O for the happy day, when I shall cease to sin, and to offend the best of friends, the Saviour of my soul! when my whole soul shall be pure and holy, and not one seed of sin be left within; when Satan shall tempt no more, and I yield no more to the temptation; when my bitter complaint against corruption and sin, shall be converted into sweet encomiums on redeeming grace: "to him that loved me, and washed me from my sins in his own blood, be glory, and honor, might, and dominion, for ever and ever."

In view of that blessed day will I rejoice; and, confiding in all-sufficient grace, I will travel to the mount of God with courage; and, leaning on my Beloved, I will journey up through the wilderness undismayed. For it is when I go in mine own strength, or walk alone, that I stumble into sin, to rectify my mistaken notions, spoil my vain confidence, and make me depend on God alone.

MEDITATION CXIV.

GRACE.

Gulf of Lyons, July, 1759.

HEAVENLY grace implanted in the soul, is the divine philosopher's stone, that turns every thing in our possession into a more excellent nature, and greater value. It is storied of the one, that it turns iron into silver, and silver into gold. But it is true of the other, that for "brass it brings gold; and for iron, silver; and for

wood, brass; and for stones, iron." Shedding divine contentment through the soul, it turns our water into wine, our pennies into pounds, our poor cottages into splendid palaces, bare supply into abundant plenty, and every thing into sufficiency, because our satisfaction is the same in this, as if possessed of that. It diminishes distress, magnifies mercies, lessens grief, enlarges love, contemns vanities, breathes after future bliss, rectifies our desires, subdues our corruptions, regulates our inclinations, restrains our ambition, raises and refines our affections, removes the present world, and presents the world to come. By it we are refined in affliction, triumph in our troubles, in all our conflicts we are more than conquerors, and turn the battle to the gate. By it we listen to rebuke, are instructed by the rod, submissive under crosses, silent under losses, patient in tribulation, meek under reproaches, humble, though exalted, forgetful of injuries, mindful of benefits, faithful to our trust, merciful to our enemies, and friends with the whole world.

By it we tremble at judgments, rejoice in mercies, observe providences, wrestle against our unbelief, are grieved at our ingratitude, and struggle against our daily failings.

By it our souls taste divine joys, and loathe the light food of worldly vanities. It sweetens our sorrows, mitigates our misfortunes, pierces the shadows, and seeks after unseen realities. Where it is implanted in the breast, every thing turns out to the advantage of the soul. The way of life, to others thorny, is flowery, and our path to our latter end is peace.

What to the carnal world is a curse, is to the possessors of this precious gem a blessing. By it our pains are banished, our pleasures are purified, expectation honied, burdens lightened, weakness strengthened, storms scattered, and harmony diffused within. What a noble thing is grace, or Christ by his spirit dwelling in the soul! No wonder, then, that such a glorious change is made, and all to the better, so that we can look towards eternity undismayed, expect the awful judgment with unshaken faith, meet the king of terrors with undaunted courage, and have hope in the expiring pang.

Let gold be a portion to the misers, honour to the ambitious, pleasures to the voluptuous, but let grace be mine; for thus my afflictions are sweeter than the prosperity of the wicked, my reproaches preferable to the applauses of a giddy world, and my very death more desirable than the life of the most splendid, if impious monarch.

MEDITATION CXV.

LOVE AND IMMORTALITY.

July 15, 1759.

Welcome change, that waits to begin my happiness, and put a period to my complaint and pain. When this languor and luke-warmness shall be turned into immortality and love, I shall be all life and vigour, and this vigour shall be all love and praise. Now corruption is a counterbalance to my love, and mortality a clog to my devotion; but then every power shall be life, every faculty active, every thought winged, and every motion heavenly. I shall praise with transport, and sing with rapture; I shall adore with ecstasy, and love with delight, and all this, day and night, without ever ceasing, or being exhausted, being then perfect in every grace, and immortal in every power. Receiving my fulness from the divine plenitude, as a pipe supplied by the vast ocean, I shall pour out perpetual streams of praise, and torrents of love, and be more and more capacitated, enlarged, and replenished, by this eternal employment.

Such is the happy state my hope claims, and to which, one time or other, I shall attain. Then shall my love be wholly a vigorous immortality, and my immortality exercised in nothing but love. On the Sun of Righteousness, divinely bright, tremendously glorious, I shall fix mine eyes, which shall be strengthened as they gaze, and never cease to behold and admire the divine object. I shall emulate the seraphim, and strive, not out of self-conceit, but from the glowings of sacred gratitude, the prevalency of divine love in my breast, to sing as loud, and love as intensely as they, the exalted one, whom I can call my Brother, my Husband, and my God.—I shall go out, in all the faculties

of my soul, to Him, without one moment's intermission; and yet mine eyes shall never be so satisfied with seeing, as to shut them on the glories above, nor mine ears fatigued with hearing the hallelujahs on high. Sleep shall be as foreign to my immortal perfection then, as it is impossible for my immortal frame to subsist without it now. There is no *comma* in the hosannas above; no night in the years of the right hand of the Most High; no interruption in the warbles of eternal noon; no surfeiting on bliss, or loathing of divine love. No distractions shall disturb the adorers before the throne, where perfect love casts out fear, where bliss is as boundless as their wish, and measures with eternity itself.

MEDITATION CXVI.

EXTREMITIES.

Gibraltar Bay, August 6, 1759.

God has in all ages been pleased to let matters come to an extremity before he sent the deliverance; thereby teaching his people patience, and to hope unto the end; thereby also making the deliverance more glorious, and his care of them more conspicuous, than otherwise it would have been.—Wherefore then magnify I every difficulty in mine eye as a mountain that cannot be removed, and distrust that divine power that can do all things, and at the last extremity?

Now, to dispel these dark and dismal clouds that hang over my mind, to my great uneasiness, let me glance at his divine procedure with his church and people, from the days of old down through many ages.

See, then, the father of the faithful is old and stricken in years, while it ceases to be with Sarah after the manner of women, before the promised seed is born. Yet that extremity is God's opportunity; for he is born, in whose seed the nations should be blessed. But, again, young Isaac is, by divine authority, to be offered for a sacrifice, and that by none other than his aged, his affectionate father! Nor are the amazing orders countermanded, till the altar is reared, the wood laid in order, the stripling bound, and laid upon the wood, and the

hand stretching out the knife to give the fatal wound. Now, what an extremity of extremities was this! but not too late for God to deliver him.—Again, wandering Hagar sees not the well as soon as the bottle is spent; but after she had laid down the parched boy, and forced herself a good distance from him, that she might not hear his mournful cries, nor see him struggling with the pangs of death, God opens her eyes, scatters her fears, and removes her sorrows.—Also just Lot makes his escape out of Sodom only on that very day in which it was destroyed; and it was destroyed early in the day. A narrow escape indeed! Perhaps the heavens were thundering round about him, the brimstone and fire falling behind him, while he fled; yet he was safe enough under his protection, to whom extremity is the noblest opportunity.—Let me also look at Jacob when returning home: He is distressed at his brother's meeting him in such a hostile manner; but when he has arranged his little company for flight, or meeting the armed bands, the kindly embrace removes the doubt, and cheers his very soul.—Joseph is to be exalted, but he is first sold by his brethren, then sold again as a slave, then a prisoner, which was like the very reverse of what was so near; but, at the last extremity, when he could be brought no lower, he was advanced, till he could, as it were, be raised no higher. Even so, his aged father's sorrow, which had all this time mingled his other comforts with bitterness, is heightened by the story of his sons, about the rough dealings of the man that was lord over Egypt: But from this very dungeon of wo, he is in a moment set into a palace of delight, when he hears that that same governor is his own son, his own beloved, his long-lamented Joseph.—Again, the promise is, that Israel shall be delivered from Egypt, and possess the promised land; but see how subtilely their enemies deal with them, and what murdering designs are formed against them! yea, when the deliverance begins to dawn, their task is doubled, and their bondage rendered next to intolerable. Such was their extremity before they were brought out with an high hand. Nay, after this, their danger seems to be greater than ever, while, pursued by enemies, on many accounts more enraged than ever, they had seas before them im-

passable, and hills on every hand inaccessible; yet then Omnipotence is at no loss to deliver, so that seas divide, and are the defence of his people, but the destruction of their foes.

This divine way of procedure, delivering in the greatest extremity, shines also in the whole history of the Judges; in the narrow escapes of flying David; in the siege of Samaria, when a lord, of the same temper with my unbelieving heart, spoke also in a style I am too often guilty of; in the case of the widow of Zarephath, whose provisions were almost spent, before the blessing was bestowed that multiplied them; in the case of her son afterwards, and the Shunamite's who appeared beyond all possibility of help, when restored to life; in the sudden deliverance of Hezekiah and Jerusalem, from the besieging Assyrians, whose mighty men and leaders a mightier angel slew in one night, to an amazing number: also in the astonishing story of the three children, who are apprehended, bound, brought to the furnace, now seven times more heated for their reception, and thrown into the flame. What can help them now? Yes, in the midst of the furnace they walk at liberty, in the presence of a glorious person, whose form is like the Son of God. Such was the remarkable deliverance of pious Daniel from the lion's paw, when cast among their bloody jaws, and left a whole night to the mercy of the fierce devourers: And of Jonah from the swelling deep, and the fish's belly, which to him was as the belly of hell: And, in fine, of the Jews from captivity, who went even to Babylon, and there were delivered. All these being brought to an extremity, perished not in it, but were delivered after a most glorious manner.

This was the way he dealt with his church and people under the Old Testament dispensation, for many hundred years; and it continued under the New. Hence see how our Lord delays his going to Lazarus, that he might not only relieve him from his disease, but raise him from the dead, which was a more glorious display of his divine power.—Such was his way also with Jairus' daughter, and the widow of Naim's son, who seemed to be the captives of death, till the Lord of life commanded their release, and that at a time when, for hint-

ing at it, he was laughed at as proposing a thing impossible to be done.—See how also, in the utmost extremity of danger, he rescues his apostle Peter, by an angel from heaven, who awakes the sleeping prisoner, guides him through the guards, and leads him on, before whom the doors and gates open of their own accord, and let him pass into perfect liberty.

What, then, is difficult for God? What extremity is beyond the reach and strength of his arm? Yea, since he is pleased to delay blessings and deliverances to the last, it is my duty to wait on him till the last, and to wait with hope, and in patience to possess my soul.

MEDITATION CXVII.

THE ASTONISHING PORTIONS.

Gibraltar Bay, August 10, 1759.

The treasures of kings have sometimes been so vast as to pass into a proverb. And yet, what were they but gold or stones dug out of the bowels of the earth, which, amassed to ever so great a sum, could neither give contentment, ensure health, nor lengthen life? But there is a portion of a diviner nature, and infinitely more excellent, which falls to the share of every saint of God; and he himself is this stupendous portion. "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul."

Now, the astonishing wonder here is, that God, in all his perfections, should condescend, through his Son, to be the portion of his people. But this wonder is not alone, but is joined with another, that is in a manner more surprising still, expressed in these words: "The Lord's portion is his people, Israel is the lot of his inheritance."

We know how highly we esteem that which we account our portion. And the pious breathing of the saint is, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." Then, may we not see what value he sets upon his saints, that he, who possesses all things, and has all perfection in himself, should call them "his portion."

A rich man may condescend to be the prop and friend of a poor man, but will scarcely allow him to be of great account to himself; but here it is otherwise, to the praise of glorious grace, which is not less astonishing in receiving than in giving. He gives the treasures of eternity, which enrich for ever; and receives the cyphers of time, which cannot prophet him at all. He gives himself to be ours in his infinite excellences for ever, and receives us, in all our wants and infirmities, to be his for evermore. Whether is he most glorious in accepting the lispings of faith, "Thou art my God," or in returning the mutual claim, "Thou art my people?" Because God is the portion of our soul, we have hope; and because he sees the travail of his soul, he is satisfied. O what condescension is this, not only to bow down to give himself away to us, but to take us up to himself! Let philosophers dream on of ten thousand inhabited worlds, yet, among them all, the Lord's portion is his people, and Israel his inheritance. The heaven is his throne, the earth his footstool, but his portion is dearer to him than both, purchased at an amazing price, and preserved by almighty power, to an immensity of bliss. Precious and costly things are in the peculiar treasures of kings; how noble, then, and excellent must Jacob be, (the choice makes it so,) whom the eternal King of kings hath chosen to himself for his peculiar treasure, for whom he will give men, and kingdoms for their ransom! Again, a treasure is that which is laid up for time to come; then God will never cast off his own inheritance, give up with his portion, or throw away his treasure, but reserve all to eternity. Finally, if God be the portion of his saints, why such a struggle to fill their coffers with perishing things? and why so disquieted if they do not succeed?

MEDITATION CXVIII.

NOAH'S ARK.

Under sail, Aug. 31, 1759.

When the ark, which had floated many a day on a fearful flood, rested on the happy Ararat, and Noah, and the numerous creatures which were to replenish

the world again, had the pleasant sight of spacious fields, just delivered from a dreadful deluge, how vast must have been their joy! And with what transport must they have gone forth into unbounded liberty, called the earth their own, and appropriated the whole world, without any to dispute the amazing possession! So, when the ark of the covenant of grace, built by a greater than Noah, and wherein is contained the seed of the new creation, shall rest on the heights of glory, how shall all the happy ones go forth with transport into the liberty of the sons of God, to possess a paradise of pleasure, an heaven of ecstasy, and a world of bliss! And though they shall never go out of the covenant through eternity, yet, so to speak, they shall spread abroad to people the heavenly Canaan, and possess the many mansions that are in their Father's house.

Here, in the covenant, we are borne above the floods; for the curse, like a deluge, overspreads the whole world, so that all are in a perishing condition, but such as are got within the ark! and in a little, when the great deeps of eternity shall be opened, the floods of vengeance swelling high shall sweep the whole unbelieving world into oceans of eternal wrath. It is true, indeed, our safety is the same, being interested in him whom the Father has given for a covenant to the people, whether the ark be floating on the waters, or set down on the stable mountain's top; but there is a difference between fluctuating on the waters of adversity, and sitting down on the mountains of bliss, in the presence of Jehovah and the Lamb.

Again, as their safety was secured, and their provision plenteous in the ark of old; so, in the New Testament ark, we are secure, being hidden in him who sits on the floods, and governs in the storms, and who will never let the deluge overthrow his own, but cause them to swim safely amongst the rending billows, and walk securely, as Israel of old, amidst devouring deeps. And our provision is not only plenteous and profuse, but spiritual and divine.

Besides, in this ark, by the eye of faith, even while the deluge is not wholly gone, we get, which Noah could not boast of, reviving views of the tops of the eternal mountains, and gladdening glances of the heights of glory.

Again, when the flood of wrath shall be at the highest with all the wicked world, our ark shall sit down on the celestial Ararat. Then, as Noah sacrificed to God when he was gone forth of the ark, which he could not do while in it; so, in that triumphant state of glory, we shall worship him in a manner to which we never could attain in the militant state; and, to our eternal joy, shall look up and see the "rainbow about the throne," in its most beauteous colours, showing, as it shines, that the flood of divine wrath, which once pursued the human race to swallow up all who had not fled to the sacred ark for safety, shall never return again to swallow up the ransomed nations. Then, dwelling in that land where "there is no more sea," we shall walk at liberty, enjoying beatitudes unlimited as our thought, and extensive as conception itself; and through the unnumbered years of his right hand, we shall proclaim the compassion, and dwell upon the love of him who was himself our divine, our glorious ark, that bare us above the waves of vengeance, (though, to perform that kind office, he himself for a while was carried "into deep waters, where the floods overflowed him,") and brought us into his presence, where rivers of pleasures flow for evermore.

MEDITATION CXIX.

ACQUAINTANCE.

Spithead, September 25, 1759.

We are fond of contracting acquaintance with great and famous men, and sometimes lament the death of some before we were born, and our distance from others while we live. What pleasure would it afford me, had I known the first worthies of the world! To have had an hour's company and conversation with the first man, the father of us all; to have been acquainted with the divine Enoch, who was wafted deathless to glory; with Noah, the preacher of righteousness; with Abraham, the father of the faithful; with Moses, the man of God; with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of one and the same promise; with the deeply depressed, and highly-advanced Joseph; with Elijah and Elisha; with Samuel, Da-

vid, and Solomon; in a word, with all the prophets, apostles, evangelists, and martyrs, and all the New-Testament worthies down to the present times: I say, to have been acquainted with all these great men, what secret pleasure would it afford! What instruction from their conversation, and what joy to behold so many sparkling graces in each of them! But this is what can never happen; yet there is one thought that abundantly supplies the loss. That all those who are united in the living Head shall meet together in the general assembly and church of the first-born.

There shall I see Adam, not in that melting anguish he sustained when driven out of the terrestrial paradise, but with a fulness of joy proper to one entered into the heavenly paradise for eternity: There shall I see Enoch walking in very deed with God, and enjoying eternally and uninterruptedly that communion he delighted in below: There shall I see Noah, not preaching to an inattentive world, but praising in concert with all those that in the ark of the covenant were saved from the flood of wrath that swept away the wicked: There shall I see Abraham, not travelling to the mountains of Moriah to offer up his son, but dwelling in the mount of God to offer up his song, his sacrifice of praise, possessed of greater glory, and more noble blessings, than even his strongest faith ever could expect: There shall I see Isaac and Jacob, not sojourning in a strange land, but dwelling in Immanuel's land, without any more removing to and fro: There shall I see Joseph, not in that anguish of spirit he was in when sold for a slave, but in a nobler condition than when governor over Egypt: There shall I see Moses, not struggling with a rebellious Israel in an howling wilderness, but triumphing with the true Israel, in whom iniquity is not beheld, and entered on the possession of the heavenly Canaan for eternity: There shall I see, also, Samuel the reformer, David the upright, and Solomon the wise, with all the prophets and apostles, the evangelists and martyrs, shining with additional lustre, and inconceivable glory. Yea, not one of all the saints of God, though the names of thousands of them were never heard of in the world, but I shall be acquainted with, and know all about them that can set forth the glory of God, and the

praises of redeeming love. I shall know who and what they were in the world, whence they came, and what they suffered for his name's sake.

Had I been acquainted with them in their imperfect state, either corruption in them might have restrained my regard toward them, or corruption in me might have deadened my affection for them; but my acquaintance with them shall be when they and I also have put off all corruption, and are spotless as the angels of light. How is it, then, that I have concluded all the worthies of the old world as gone from me for ever, when in a little, I shall come into their company, into their assembly, to depart no more? Further, what will sweeten all, is, that my acquaintance with them shall be in and through Christ, in whom all his saints are one; and my delight in them will spring from their resemblance to Christ, and rise according to the degree of that. Then, like so many stars, they shall reflect the glory of the Sun of Righteousness; and he that reflects most glory shall be the brightest star. Besides, as the Lamb is the light of the holy city, so he shall be the fulness of the higher house, replenishing all the inhabitants, who shall have Christ in them, once "the hope," but then the harvest "of glory," and with them as such shall I be acquainted. Hence shall Christ be to every one all in all, even in their delight in, and acquaintance with, one another; because, loving him that begets, supremely and eternally, they cannot but love them that are begotten after the same divine likeness.

What a friendly office, then, (though to the greater part unwelcome, does death, in the hand of Christ perform to his chosen, in convening the saints together from remotest corners, scattered kingdoms, and distant ages, and, with a smiling countenance, ushering them, not only into the presence of one another, but into the presence of their Lord!

On the other hand, how miserable must the wicked be, whose acquaintance with the great, of which they are now so proud, at the hour of death shall cease for ever! for beings in torment can be no entertaining company to one another, but, by being once companions in sin, shall mutually screw up their horror, and whet their anguish for ever.

MEDITATION CXX.

AN ARGUMENT.

In harbour, Oct. 3, 1759.

WOULD a man of any spirit be cast down for an extremity of distress, enduring but for a day, if assured that his whole after-life should be felicity and peace? Though for this short time he were hungry, thirsty, naked, imprisoned, reproached, reviled, envied, hated, contemned, ridiculed by flatterers, abandoned by friends, insulted by foes, and made the gazing-stock of all; yet, would not the certain knowledge of so sudden a change in his favour take off the edge of all? Would not the forethought of the sumptuous table at which he should ever sit, and the generous wine that should go around, abate his hunger, and allay his thirst? Would not the idea of his genteel dress take away the shame of his rags? and his unconfined liberty render supportable his few hours confinement? and that renown, love, and respect, which he should in a little be possessed of, take away the anguish that might arise from the opposite insults?

Now, O saint! thy case at the worst can be no worse than this, to suffer, through the short day of thy life, much tribulation, and many afflictions; much distress and many troubles; yea, though some singular distress, as war, persecution, or pestilence, should bring thy death along with it, yet thy state is secured, and thine exit is into eternal glory. What! should poverty make any impression on thy mind, who art an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ; who shalt walk on streets of gold, nor regard the sparkling pavement? Should imprisonment trouble thee, who shalt walk at liberty in the paradise of God through eternal day? Should shame produce a blush in thy countenance, who shalt be confessed by thy divine Master before his heavenly Father, and all his holy angels? Should want of any kind affect thee, who art complete in Him in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells? Should disappointments, repeated, aggravated, disappointments, deject thee whose assured Friend governs the universe, and never will forget, never will forsake thee? In a word, should any cross events in time distract thee, who hast an eternity

of felicity before thee, where thy happiness shall stretch beyond thy most extensive thoughts?

Take the scales and balances, then, and sit down and weigh the lightness of thy troubles, the transitoriness of thine afflictions, (even allowing them to harass thee through thy whole life, which is not one day, one minute, or one moment, to eternity,) and that boundless, ineffable bliss, that awaits thy better life, thine immortal state in the invisible world, and say, if that ingenuity, which should be inseparable from an expectant of glory, be in thee, whether fits of despondency for any thing that can befal thee in this world, or songs of praise for that nameless immense ALL that is reserved for thee in the world to come, be most proper to thy present state?

MEDITATION CXXI.

ON BEING ILL USED.

Spithead, Oct. 18, 1759.

SURELY I forget myself, and the place of my abode, else I should not take it in bad part to be ill used in such a world as this. Would I have at once the smiles of Heaven and the caresses of the earth? It is very fair that I get through the enemy's country with the life, though now and then I suffer loss. I must not be surprised that I suffer, though innocent: for none were ever so innocent as our blessed Lord, yet none suffered more than did the Prince of innocence. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" Why am I astonished at an usage which my Lord not only met with himself, but assured all his disciples that they should experience? How is it that I have fallen into this fond delusion, dreaming that nothing should hurt me while I was endeavouring to walk uprightly with him before whom are all my ways, and forgetting that often the saints have suffered for following after what is good? I am yet in the world, and the god of this world is not my God, nor the men of this world my brethren; therefore no

wonder that the world hate what is not its own. For shame! have I taken it amiss, that a few drops of that shower of malice and envy which poured in full flood on the glorious Head, should fall on an unworthy member? How have I forgotten to imitate the divine pattern of humility, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when blasphemed, replied with meekness, interceded for his murderers, and prayed for his most flagitious foes! O to be more and more self-denied! If once I thought as little of myself as I ought, I should not think much of being treated with indignity, and used contemptuously by others.

Though I may have recourse to the law for my protection and defence, yet surely it is often my duty to say, like humble David, "Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him." How divinely sweet is the inspired advice, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves but rather give place unto wrath!" Ah! says corrupt nature, must I tamely see myself abused, and not resent it? Must I not stand on my own defence, and return his wickedness on his own head? No, says the apostle; vengeance belongeth not to you; "for it is written, Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay;" therefore let the matter alone, leave it to God, who knows when and how to plead thy quarrel against thine adversaries; and show thou the excellency of the Christian religion, by feeding thine enemy when hungry and giving him to drink when thirsty, till thou hast won him from his spleen; but, if he still retain his inveterate malice, thy kindly acts will heap coals of fire upon his head. Then, let my behaviour be such as is here enjoined, while, with the psalmist, I say, "Let them curse, but bless thou;" keeping ever fixed in thy mind this maxim, That a greater pleasure springs from a free and frank forgiveness of injuries to the sanctified soul, than the most choleric breast can feel in the most sanguine revenge.

Has not the sun often shed his cloudless beams on them who blasphemed their Maker? Have not the clouds many a time watered their fields who never acknowledged the divine munificence? And has not all nature poured forth her riches, times innumerable, to those who walked contrary to the God of nature? Came

these things by chance? No. They were the effects of his unbounded goodness, which teems divinely free and vastly full on all, in spite of the ingratitude of the wicked, in spite of the daring impiety of the unjust; no less showing himself God in his conduct with the world, than in his creation of the world. Copy, then, my soul, this amiable perfection. Deal with the whole world, as if every one were thy brother, or thy friend; and though they may forfeit the name, let them never forfeit thy kind regard. As the sun changes not his course, though bursting clouds and bellowing thunders fight below; so, if thou move in the celestial sphere of practical religion, thou wilt never omit the duties of a Christian to any, though all should commit the hostilities of an heathen towards thee. Let not the distress of thine enemy afford thee delight, nor the misfortunes of thy inveterate foe infuse a secret pleasure. Sympathise with him in his calamity who could laugh at thine; and, as far as is consistent with truth, preserve his good name, who, to the wounding of truth, has robbed thee of thine. Remember benefits, forget injuries, forgive reproachful tongues, overlook affronts, wish well to every individual, pray for all for whom prayer ought to be made, and be a child of God in temper and conduct, in spite of corrupt nature, earth, and hell, aiming at perfection, as thy Father which is in heaven is perfect.

MEDITATION CXXII.

THE BIBLE A STOREHOUSE OF INSTRUCTIONS.

Quiberon Bay, Jan. 23, 1759.

Man is not only a worm as to his extract, but a beast as to his knowledge; hence, the most sagacious of Adam's sons, would be but fools in things that concern them most, without this divine monitor, the Scripture. Here I am informed when the world began, and who was my first parent, the grand representative and federal head of all his offspring; how sin and death entered into the world, and how both are done away. Hence the mystery of a three-one God shines with awful effulgence; while the glorious, amiable, and divine work of

redemption, darts comfort and surprise on the enraptured inquirer. By the scriptures of truth, the concerns of a future world are clearly presented to me. Would I be a member of Christ, and have his righteousness made mine? Well, they tell me how I may become the one, and be clothed with the other. Would I flee from the wrath to come? Here the way lies plain, and the place where I can be safe. If sin press hard upon me, they show me where to cast my sins; if short-comings and weakness vex me, whence to draw my strength, and in whom I am complete. They counsel me in my doubts, and shine upon my darkness. Not a calamity can I be in, but they can cheer. Not a step I need to take but they can direct. Am I a son of Zion? Then I am to seek her peace, her welfare, and prosperity.—Is the church in distress? I am to give God no rest till he establish her, and make her a praise through the whole earth.—Does he hide his face from me? Then I am to seek, nor cease to seek him, till I find the Beloved of my soul.—Do I pine by his blow? Yet at the work of his hand I am to be dumb.—Does he remove my relations by death? Still I am to hold my peace, and even subscribe Amen.—Am I injured? That I am to forgive.—Am I reproached? This I am to pass by.—Do men despitefully use me? For them I am to pray.—Must I remove from this world? Then I am to pass my time only as a sojourner, not a fixed inhabitant.—Do I enjoy human society? That is to be improved in speaking on divine things.—Am I among sinners? Then I am to reprove.—Among saints? These I am to imitate.—Have I an house? It is to be a place of righteousness.—Have I a family? They and I, whatever others do, are to serve the Lord.

Again, am I sorrowful? I am to pray.—Am I in severe afflictions? Yet then in patience I am to possess my soul.—Am I in a warfare? I am to take to myself the whole armour of God.—Have I tribulations? In and under them I am still to rejoice.—Am I poor? I am to seek for my riches that treasure that is eternal in the heavens.—Have I riches? In them I am not to trust, but in the living God, who gives me all things richly to enjoy.—Do I rejoice? It is to be only in the Lord.—Am I merry? I am to sing psalms.—Have I affections?

They are to be set on things above. My conversation is to be in heaven, and my soul a temple for the Holy Ghost to dwell in. Here parents and children, masters and servants, and every relation, are clearly instructed in their relative duties to one another. Here the King is taught how to reign, and the subject how to obey; the judge how to conduct every trial, and how to pass sentence; the sinner how to become a saint, and the saint how to grow in every grace.

Here I am instructed what company to choose, what so shun; whom to esteem and delight in, whom to pity, and for whom to pray. Here I am admonished how to behave as a public or private person towards men of every rank, in peace or war, as victor or vanquished. Here are the infallible rules whereby I may know the state of my soul, and if my claim for future bliss be well grounded, or founded on delusive dreams. Here I learn for what to care, and how to estimate created things, and all the gaudy pomp of time. In a word, here I am taught how to have my conversation in heaven, while on earth, to ripen for glory, and enlarge for God.

MEDITATION CXXIII.

ASSURANCE.

Should not the folly of the world teach me wisdom? They provide for time, and shall I not provide for eternity? But, how shall I secure endless felicity, and know my interest in unchangeable love?

Well, then, may not I, in the language of faith, argue myself into a firm belief of eternal bliss? and, without delusion, fortify myself against the attacks of sin, and sallies of unbelief?—Is not Christ come to seek and save the lost? and am not I among the number, and willing to be sought and saved?—Is not the call to all the sons of men without exception? Why, then, not obey it without contradiction?—Am not I commanded to believe and be saved? Then, have I never believed as yet, or am I determined never to believe? No; "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."—Further, has my faith the marks of true faith? Is it a faith that purifies the heart, and aims at holiness in life?

Have I accepted of Christ on his own terms, of a whole and complete Saviour? Then true faith can never be disappointed, nor the true believer fall finally away, for "faith is the gift of God," and "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

Now, from the foot of the ladder I ascend, and climb the sacred steps, till I reach the throne of God, and read the secrets of eternity, the records of redeeming love. Hence, if my daily burden be indwelling sin, and if I strive against the tyrant raging in my breast, in such a manner, that what I do I allow not, this is a sign of the new nature; for light and darkness cannot dwell together in perfect peace, but darkness and darkness struggle not together. Now, will not this say, that I am partly sanctified; and if sanctified, that I am justified; and if justified, that I am predestinated; and if predestinated, that I by name am foreknown in the decree of election? Now, am I not as sure of salvation, as if I were in heaven already? Can the purpose of God be disannulled? Can the faithfulness of God fail?

I may doubt and be in the dark again, respecting my clearness to my claim, but he will never deny himself. Heaven and earth may, yea, shall pass away, but his purposes of love, and promises of grace, shall stand. Can I not trust God in time for the completing of my promised happiness when time shall be no more, as well as trust him for the continuation of my consummate felicity in heaven, through eternity itself? Can times and dates, periods and æras, make any change on God! No, all is eternity with the unchangeable Jehovah; flying time only respects frail and dying creatures, such as I am. If, then, I have an interest in his love now, I shall have it for ever; for though death tears my soul and body asunder, it shall not touch my state, nor separate me from his love. Now, what would faith, nay, what would sense have more?

But, there is another security given to mine eternal bliss; for I am elected "in the Beloved." Now, heaven and eternity would look strange to the believers, if their best friend were not there; and empty to Christ, if his costly purchase was not there. Yea, my happiness is, as it were, connected with the happiness of the man Christ. Now, the Son is eternally united to the

human nature, as Mediator; and there is no jarring betwixt the human and divine natures, in the person of the Son. There being, therefore a sacred oneness between the glorious Head and all his members, there is also a commonness of felicity, among them; so that the glory which the Father gives to Christ, he gives to his disciples, and into the very joy of their Lord all his followers enter. Therefore, in and with an exalted and glorified Jesus, I shall be eternally blessed. Now, unless I be afraid that Christ mystical can be divided, the divine attributes set a jarring, the hypostatical union dissolved, the covenant of grace disannulled, and the eternal decrees broken, I may rest in the sweetest assurance of divine favour, in spite of all the blasts that earth and hell, and sin and unbelief, can raise.

MEDITATION CXXIV.

OUR MEDITATIONS CRAMPED, UNLESS STRETCHED BEYOND DEATH.

1761.

Would any man envy that person's situation as superlatively happy, who were confined to a garden, beautified indeed with all the varieties of nature, and decorated with all the ornaments of art, if its walls were high to heaven, so that he could not cast a look beyond them, but must remain a stranger to the whole world, except his own family, not being indulged with a single glance of the spacious plains that border on him, the shady forests, and the murmuring streams, the mighty oceans, and magnificent kingdoms, scattered on the face of the globe, and so could neither exult in the felicity, nor sympathize with the affliction, of any tribe of men? Yet this man would be far more happy, (as here he might remember his latter end,) than he that dares not look beyond death, that will not think on a world to come.

How is he cooped up, that can only reflect on the few scenes that are past, or revolve in his mind those which are expected to take place during a present, but transitory life! How is he straitened in his acquaintance, though a courtier, though a king, who only knows and is known among the perishing sons of clay,

but never lets his thoughts penetrate in the world of spirits, or rise to the Father of lights! Such a man, whatever he be in this world, is to be deplored, not imitated: pitited, not envied.

If the dissolving pangs sets a bound to my meditations, I am of all meditants most miserable; but if I can transpierce the shadows of death through a well-grounded faith in Christ, and rise into the broad day of eternity, to breathe there as in a native air, then every thought triumphs, and my whole soul is joyful and serene; for thus I may smile in the face of impending ruin, knowing that my treasure is on high. Thus may I, undisturbed, stand the overthrow of thrones, being assured that the throne of God my Saviour is established of old, and stands for ever sure. Thus may I get foretastes of the bliss, prelibations of the banquet above.

Now, my state must be either thus happy, or else of such a terrible extreme, that when I look towards death, I am troubled; towards judgment, I am terrified; towards God, I tremble; and towards eternity, I am lost in astonishment and anguish. But happy condition! if I can look on this world as my pilgrimage and prison, and on death as the door through which I shall enter into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; and if even now, by meditating on the exercise that employs the church of the first-born, the divine communion they are admitted to, the beatitudes they enjoy, and the glories they behold, I familiarise the unseen world to my soul, and contract acquaintance in eternity itself.

MEDITATION CXXV.

HOW TO BE RICH IN HEAVEN.

Sept. 25, 1768.

If it is prudent to provide for the time to come, how much more so to provide for eternity! While to be rich in this world is the passion of thousands, to be rich in the next be mine. An appetite after earthly grandeur, bewrays a mean spirit, and a base soul; but an ambition to be great in heaven, is worthy of an heir of God, of an expectant of glory: For it is to the honor of the supreme Potentate, that all his subjects be nobles, be priests, be kings.

In this short lifetime is the foundation laid of things of eternal moment, and the wisdom that is from above will teach me to send all my treasures thither. It deserves little or no pity to be poor in this world, but poverty in the other is deplorable beyond the reach of compassion. Temporal losses may distress me; but such is the brevity of life, that while I complain I expire, and then I am possessed of all the treasures of glory, of all the fulness of God. And yet, according to the capacity of glorified saints, shall that same undiminished fulness be possessed in greater or lesser degree.

"How rich died he?" is the speech of fools at the decease of an acquaintance or friend. But none ever die rich but the saints; for, how can that man be said to die rich, when the very moment of his dissolution robs him of his all?

"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven," is the admonition of the dear Redeemer. Let me, then, lay down an imperfect plan to myself, how to be rich for eternity.

1. Then, presupposing that I am in a gracious state, I must have a Christian contempt of the world. No man ever filled his coffers with sand; no monarch ever wore the pebble in his crown; so the soul that lays up his treasures in heaven, will not concern himself with perishing trifles. If my affections are not weaned from the creature, and set on things above, I shall be but poor in the world of spirits.

2. I must be watchful in all things. The man that is anxious to be rich will not waste a penny; so must I watch mine actions, my thoughts, my words.—Again, I must watch for God, against all my secret sins, and also to reprove the transgressor. A bold and sincere reproof of sin, is a stroke against the enemies of the King, from which a palm of victory shall spring in the world of glory. I must also speak in commendation of the good land, that others may be encouraged to set out for the land of promise. And could I bring the whole world with me, I should be more welcome to the seats of bliss.—Again, I must watch against carnal sorrow. Should the heir of a crown lament the loss of a feather? What can death do in his family who is the resurrection and the life? It may separate them a little while,

but it is only to meet again for ever.—Worldly riches give their owners joy, but joy in the Lord increases spiritual riches. So I must guard against carnal delight; none of the gay things of time must be objects of my affection. It would be mean for a noble personage to be charmed with a stable, who has a palace prepared for him; mean for an heir of God to sit down and feed on the refuse of the creation.—Again, I must beware of carnal company. These are bankrupts that will spend at my expense, and whatever loss I make by them, yet in their company I shall never be able to add a mite to my celestial treasure. How can I be safe among robbers? They may rob me of a good frame, wound my conscience, and at last leave me with a bleeding heart, which may pain me many days.

3. To grow rich for the world to come, I must study to be heavenly-minded, not by fits and starts, but in one constant, steady, holy frame of spirit. Thus every duty will be my delight; prayer and praise, like my daily food, always pleasant; attendance on the public ordinances, like walking in the King's palace-garden; reading the Scriptures, like conferring with the dearest friend; and self-examination, like the merchant from a far country, counting over his rich jewels and precious gems, inspecting his gold and silver, that it have the king's stamp, and so be sterling money; that his graces, his duties, his attainments, are approved by Scripture and conscience.

4. Holy meditations will mightily augment the spiritual riches. To find God in all things, and at all times, in all places, and in all providences, will enrich my soul for eternity. To find his power in this, his wisdom in that, and his goodness in all, will greatly improve my inquiring, my admiring soul. Meditating much, meditating often, meditating with delight, on him in whom are hid the treasures of wisdom, is a noble way to enrich me for a future world.

5. To be rich in the better country, I must heartily study to approve of all the dispensations of Providence; though not insensible when he frowns, or when he smiles. When the soul of the Christian, with a filial resignation, acquiesces in the conduct of his Almighty Father, however cross to flesh and blood, and, in the

midst of all commotions, reposes himself on his unchangeable love, he takes deep root for eternity; while fear and unbelief toss the unstable, like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. It is proper only to children, not to men, to be peevish for toys and trifles; so let the men of this world lament the loss of worldly things, but let the heirs of God, the joint heirs with Christ, rejoice that the treasures of eternity are theirs.

6. To be rich unto God, and for eternity, I must act strong faith on the Rock of ages; for it is from the spoils of battles won by faith, that I amass riches for the invisible world. Faith relying on a reconciled God in all his attributes and perfections, on Jesus in all his offices and relations, on the Holy Ghost in all his graces and operations, must remove mountains of difficulty, pluck up trees of corruption, pull down strong-holds of sin, wrestle against principalities and powers, and be more than conqueror at last, through her all-glorious Author and Finisher.

7. I must also redeem time, and improve time; redeem time from this world, and improve it for the world to come. The man of business will be loth to lose a *change-hour* for any trifling amusement; and the soul that would be busy for eternity, should look on every hour as his last hour, and should avoid excess of sloth and slumber. Vain amusements, impertinent employments, are cruel moths of time; and time is to be husbanded, though worlds should be squandered away. As the jeweller deals with gold, so must I with time; he is careful about the filings, and loses nothing; so should I about the smallest divisions of time, the hour, the minute, the moment. It never made a dying person's bed thorney, that, by a bad bargain, he lost such and such a sum; but mispent time has made the dying moments of many dismal beyond expression.

8. To be rich in the world to come, I must have an intense love towards God and heavenly things. The men that love the world, pant after the dust of the world, and spare no pains to be rich in the world. A man will never toil himself to gather what he despises; so, unless I prefer heavenly things to earthly, I shall never seek to fill my treasure with invisible excellences. "He that loveth silver," says the wise man, "shall not

be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase." But he that loveth God shall be satisfied with God, and entranced with the exuberant fulness of the covenant.

9. To be rich indeed at last, I must endeavour to maintain communion with God now. To have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, in all his divine fulness, his glorious perfections, and his gracious ways, is the most enriching course that I can carry on below. Every moment of divine intercourse would be sinking another sum in the bank of heaven, so that I should be wondrous rich at last. He that quits the Indies for Europe, sends his treasures before him; then, though he be poor at his departure from the one country, yet he is rich on his arrival at the other; so, well were it with me, if I could detach my thoughts and meditations, my care and affections, my joy and delight, my hope and expectation, from this perishing world, and centre them on the invisible world.

10. In a word, to abound in all things in the better country, I must make God my all in all, and just sit down and wonder at the overflowing treasure, till my mouldering clay let my immortal soul fly hence to commence immensely rich in heaven, in the possession of his infinite self, world without end.

MEDITATION CXXVI.

REVENGE REJECTED.

Oct. 12, 1771.

Such is the corruption of human nature, such is the weakness of grace in this imperfect state, that, though the most part of Christians can act the Christian in some things, it is rare to find the man who can act the Christian in all things. When we are only spectators of the conduct of others, it is easy to prescribe, like an apostle, and enforce the golden rules of the gospel; but, when it toucheth our very selves, we are troubled. A beam can lie concealed in our own eye, while a mote is clearly seen in our neighbour's. I am a man, a sinner; and to guard against sinful sallies of passion is

the design of this meditation; since, being a man, I must expect to suffer from one hand or other; and being a sinful man, under my sufferings I may sin.

The malice I have an eye to is causeless, cruel, rivetted, and unrelenting, so that my natural spirits boil at the remembrance, and breathe retaliation to the guilty. But the character of the Christian is meekness, and the person who expects to arrive at heaven, must have his conversation in heaven, even while dwelling on the confines, and contending with the fire-brands of hell.

The precept and example of the King of saints shall ever be my pattern in the militant state, "Love your enemies," says the non-such Teacher; and "let me heal his ear, that lost it while leading on the unhallowed crowd to apprehend me as a thief," says the divine Redeemer. These are lessons worthy of a God to give, and worthy of all the sons of God to imitate. The military hero, under the eye and by the command of his prince, scales walls, takes cities, runs in the face of danger, and defies death itself; and so the Christian hero, prompted by the presence and the precept of Heaven, should study to conquer *self*, and all is won. "Love the brotherhood," says an apostle; I hear all the saints add Amen, for "we know that we are passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." But "love your enemies," (I feel corrupt nature reluctant!) is the *I say* of the great Apostle and High Priest of our profession; and to do so would prove, not only that we are passed from death to life, but that grace is very lively.

It is a shame for me to take so far amiss, or dwell so much on, what a fellow-creature, who is on the same level, or only a little superior to me, has done to me, and yet never reflect on my offence against God, who is infinitely exalted above me, beyond conception and thought. If I am injured, the law is broken; if the law is broken, God is dishonoured; and that God is dishonoured, and not that I am injured, should be the cause of my sorrow, and the burden of my soul. He cannot greatly offend against me, though he should spue out his bitterest malice; for it matters not, though the potsherds of the earth, while striving with the pot-

sherds of the earth, should go all to shivers; but I shall greatly offend against God, who is over all blessed for ever, if I render evil for evil, since he has expressly forbidden it.

How often have I wasted precious time, by revolving in my mind all the aggravations of my injurious treatment, forgetful that every day I have offended God in a much greater degree! forgetful, also, that I have daily received from him such tender mercies as might make me forget all the mischief that my fellow-creatures could do to me. That malice must owe its birth to hell, that could wish the hated persons condemned to everlasting flames; and I aver that there is not a saint on the footstool, but can wish his greatest enemy a share in the common salvation, and a mansion in the highest heavens. How mean, how inconsistent, then, to wish him a kingdom and a crown, and yet that he may have a thorn in his foot, (trouble in person, family, character, or estate,) while travelling thither.

"Follow peace with all men," enemies not excepted. Though some individuals break this command with respect to me, yet I am not less bound to observe it towards them. Moreover, why should I, who have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, peace of conscience, and shall shortly enter into an eternity of peace, have an uproar of war kindled in all the powers of my soul, by the impotent bravadoes of a worm? Suppose there is nothing engaging, nothing amiable about my opponent, that can make me love him for his own sake, yet I am to love him for God's sake, because by God commanded so to do. "God is love;" this the whole creation knows, while his sun shines on the evil and the good, and his rain falls on the just and the unjust; and "he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God." Shall any temptation, shall any unjust usage, provoke me from my high abode to sit down on the dunghill of anger and revenge? Whenever I cease to dwell in love, and to be all love to friends and foes, (no matter how they have used me,) then I cease to dwell in God. And this is as if a royal personage should descend from his throne, and wade to his arm-pits in a puddle to pursue a fly, or kill a frog. With what a strange appearance would he again ascend his throne! And how shall

I return from a worse situation to my divine dwelling-place?

Again, have I never received any favours or benefits from him? or, have there never been acts of friendship between us? Why, then, is all this forgot in the heat of my wrath? It should be my study, and would be my glory, never to forget a kindness, never to remember an injury. This may be called a mean spirit by the world, but I am sure it is the spirit of Christianity. Moreover, can I suppose myself so perfect, as to receive so much ill usage, and return none? Then, if I have said or done aught amiss in the excess of my passion as no doubt I have, should not I make some allowance for this in the folly of my friend? especially if incendiaries come between, who always represent things in the worst light.

I may be apt to think, that, had my haters the least appearance of the grace of God about them, I could then frankly forgive them. But, would not this be the cruelty of a fiend? If they have no interest in God, are they not doubly the objects of my most tender compassion? If a man has lost a hand, will I pity him? but if he has lost eyes, legs, and arms, will I storm in cruel rage against him? In offending brethren, I must pity the error, and forgive them; but, in offending sinners, I must commiserate their very state, and pray for them. And, indeed, this would be the only way to render love for hatred, and good for evil. Henceforth, therefore, I will carry my bitterest enemies to the throne of grace, and implore the best of blessings on my most flagitious foes.

If a man uses me rudely or injuriously in the rage of a fever, I feel nothing for mine own maltreatment, but a real concern for my frantic friend, and hope the crisis of the fever will restore him to the use of his reason; or, if another person would gnaw his own flesh to do me a mischief all the year round, then, with deeper compassion, I consider my unhappy acquaintance as a confirmed lunatic, or miserable bedlamite. Even so I should look on the man that uses me ill in a fit of passion, as in a mental delirium, and pity him; and on him that maltreats me from month to month, and from year to year, as a mental lunatic, and com-

miserate his mournful situation from the bottom of my soul

If I will not forgive a fellow-creature a hundred pence, (about poor three pounds !) how can I daily plead with Heaven to be forgiven my ten thousand talents, (twenty-two millions Sterling !) and yet, unless I am daily favoured with richer pardons than the remission of any given sum, I am undone for ever.

As it is noble to prevent the needy with our charity, and not wait till importuned, so it is truly noble to forgive injuries, though neither desired to do it, nor thanked for it. When an offending person confesses his fault, and begs pardon, it is praise-worthy to pardon, and yet we can do no less, because we are victorious over him in his submission. But it is much more noble, from a sense of duty, to forgive stubborn offenders, because then we obtain a victory over ourselves, which is the best of all conquests.

To indulge rancor and revenge may gratify my unrenewed part, but cannot benefit my better part here or hereafter; but to forgive and forget enemies and injuries, will be no grief of mind to me when I arrive at the heavenly state, mingle among saints and angels, and dwell in the presence of God.

April 6, 1777.—Alas ! my meditation is not finished till my antagonist is no more ! O how few years brings us to our latter end ! and why should we keep our anger for ever, and our contentions while we live ? It is comfort to me, that some years ago we were reconciled; and O how feeble is the wrath of a mortal, who cannot defend himself from a moment's sickness ! Now he is taken up with the great concerns of the world of spirits, and that for eternity; and in a little I shall also arrive at my fixed state, and be taken up with eternal things. O that the precious time, and precious thoughts, which I employed on what I accounted ill usage, had been spent in heavenly meditations ! then I had brought meat out of the eater, and sweetness out of the strong. May this be a caveat to me in all time coming, that whatever maltreatment I may get from a fellow-creature, quite to overlook it, and to acknowledge Heaven in all, and to meditate on heaven for all: Thus shall I behave like a child of God, and a candidate for glory.

O how foolish is it to fear a worm or a grasshopper, as if the Most High did not rule over all the children of men!

To live in view of eternity would make me think little of the love or the hatred, the affection or affronts, of my fellow-creatures, since in a little they shall go from me, or I from them, into the invisible world; and I cannot tell how soon.

MEDITATION CXXVII.

WHITSUNDAY.

May 28, 1773.

From every season of the year, from every period of time, natural or artificial, we may learn something. At this time, then, the landed proprietors set the whole country in motion, and there is a mighty stir to answer their demands. Some wealthy farmers care not a farthing for this critical day, because they are prepared for it; others have plenty both of money and chattels, but their money lies so scattered in the country, that they cannot command one shilling, and they cannot convert their stock into cash, so that for the time their credit is like to break, notwithstanding all their plenty. But the *poor* farmer finds term-day overtake him, and he knows not what to do, or where to turn. Well let this remind the landlord and the tenant, that a day of accounts will come, when the lease of life expires, and the great Proprietor of heaven and earth will reckon with them for all they have enjoyed. Some saints are so clear respecting their interest in Christ, so rich in his imputed righteousness, so full of heavenly assurance, that they rather rejoice than tremble at the day of judgment; others though in a gracious state, are so uncumbered with worldly cares, are so beclouded with desponding thoughts, that they cannot collect their evidences for the better country, and are afraid that, when they stand in the judgment, they shall be condemned. But the sinner, who is poor towards God, and has nothing provided for eternity, not the least evidence for heaven, well may tremble and be horribly afraid for the judgment.

Again, every other creditor will be staved off, and delayed for a time, that the landlord be not disappointed of his rents. O that we were thus wise in spiritual things! first to have matters between God and our souls on a comfortable footing, and then all other things shall run in a pleasant channel.

Being to clear with the landlord, occasions an universal clearance with one another. Even so, in the day of judgment, not only the sins committed directly against God, but injuries against one another, whereby he also is offended, shall be condemned in his presence.

The thoughtless and improvident tenant makes no diligence till the very term-day comes, and then what running from person to person, to borrow but for a few days! but in vain, since the same term has overtaken them all, as well as him. Even so the foolish virgins, in that awful day, will find no oil to buy, but must be shut out from the heavenly marriage, for ever to dwell in darkness and despair.

Again, some may think themselves richly provided for this day, and able to answer all their landlord's demands, but how are they confounded to find their bank-bills refused, as being forged or insufficient, or their cash cast back as being foreign, counterfeit, or too light. Just so, alas! many presumptuous hypocrites will find all their feigned righteousness rejected; proud legalists will find their good works, when weighed, miserably wanting; and all who depend on any thing but the perfect righteousness of Jesus, will find themselves eternally lost.

Again, whether we look to town or country, we will find the confusion universal; people removing from place to place, houses left without inhabitant, and some families thrown out, that can scarce find a house to go to; masters changing servants, and for a few days with scarce a servant to attend them; servants going to new masters, and some thrown altogether out of a place; and even young infants, that know not whither they are going, are subjects of the general confusion. May not this remind us all, whether masters or servants, householders or lodgers, landlords or tenants, that we must all soon, how soon we cannot tell, remove from this to the invisible world? Wo to the inhabitant, whether he

dwell in a palace or in a cottage, who must quit his clay tabernacle, without any hopes of being admitted into the mansions of glory! Wo to the man who has all his life-time been the servant of sin, and shall find, at the awful hour of death, that eternal death shall be all the wages of his service! The man of gray hairs, who is half-dead to this world, and the infant of a span long, who knows nothing of a world to come, must go together to the silent grave.

Would he not be an arrant fool, who though warned away from his farm, and from his house, should let the period expire, without providing himself in another, and thus be cast into the open fields at last? Such examples are rare, but instances of a more consummate folly are fearfully abundant, while numbers, who know that they must very soon drop this mortal frame, and quit with all below, give themselves no concern, and take no thought how or where they shall dwell through an endless eternity.

Though a time of removal be expected, and provided for too, yet when it comes there is always some unexpected hurry and confusion along with it. Just so, though we expect death ourselves, or on some of our family, yet we may expect to be surprised at last, and taken at unawares; therefore it will be our wisdom not to delay the great work of making our calling and election sure, till sickness enfeeble every nerve, and death sit down on our eye-lids.

The poor farmer, who tugs and sweats to gather his master's rent, thinks such gentlemen are the only happy persons on the face of the earth; not considering that many men of fortune find it difficult to keep their incomes and expenses on an equal balance; that others are still more extravagant than opulent; and that a third sort, the worst of all, spend their estates to ruin their souls. It is rare to find in the world those that can use it, and not abuse themselves or it; therefore a golden mediocrity has been the wish of all wise men in all ages.

At this time some monied men have it in their power by helping a poor friend, or an indigent neighbour, to win a blessing to themselves, and lose nothing at the latter end. What blessings, then, should an elect

world ascribe to Jesus, that best that none such friend, who for them answers all the demands of law and justice, and has got their full, their final discharge at the court of heaven, from his Almighty Father's hand, so that they have no claims, no condemnation to fear, either in this world, or in that to come!

Lastly, when those who had to remove are snugly accommodated in their new houses; when masters have got home their servants, and servants got to their places; when debtors have cleared with their creditors, and farmers got their landlord's discharge; then what a sweet calm, serenity, and joy succeed to the late tumult of thought and whirlwind of anxiety! Even so, when the saints arrive at the mansions of glory, are acquitted by the Judge of all the earth, and finally discharged from sin and death, then shall they forget their afflictions as the waters that flow away, then joy shall crown their heads, and songs shall fill their mouth, and they shall be satisfied with their own felicity, exult in his salvation, and be ravished with his goodness for ever.

MEDITATION CXXVIII.

AGAINST MURMURING AT MISFORTUNES.

May 4, 1776.

If Providence is pleased to crush my comforts of any kind, shall I make my situation less comfortable by complaining? If God chastises me as a son, shall I make myself an enemy, by rebelling against the discipline of my Father's house? If Heaven sends affliction on me, shall I make the sad addition of sin to my sorrow, by quarrelling at my sufferings? If I am not so happy as I would choose to be, I should still study to be holy, humble, and content, and I shall never be very miserable. It is only in the things of time that I am disappointed; and what else can I expect, where infinite wisdom has pronounced all to be vanity and vexation of spirit! He that lets God go for the creature, may well expect storms and tempests to blow around him. He that promises to himself happiness in any thing under the sun, shall every day of his life have one lesson or other to rectify his mistake. He that seeks not God in all

things, and prefers not God above all things, and is not satisfied with God in the room of all things, may expect vexation in every thing, and shall be happy in nothing. To fathers of our flesh we have given obedience, even when their own pleasure was the rule of their conduct; and shall we be less submissive to the Father of our spirits, when our profit is always in his heavenly plan? In our choice of good things, in our requests for blessings, we may be mistaken, but in his bounty he cannot err, whether he gives much or little, this or that, any thing or nothing. Surely, I can never think or say that my wisdom could have made the world, or myself; how, then, can I think that my wisdom could rule the world or myself? that cannot be called a misfortune that makes me wiser, or a cross that makes me better, or a loss that makes me richer in heaven, or a disappointment which makes me quit with every creature, and cleave to God alone. If a burden is tied on my back, which I must carry to such a place, the more I fling it from me, it falls down with the greater weight, and, instead of getting free of it, it becomes a greater burden still; but, if I go on calmly, my burden grows gradually lighter, by my patience and submission, till I get quit of it at last altogether.

Not stupid, but submissive, not dejected, but resigned, not combating the means, nor quarrelling the instrument, but confessing the first cause, and adoring the sovereignty of Heaven, is my present duty, and will be my peace both now and in time to come.

There is not an angel of God, nor a saint in glory but approves of the whole conduct of Providence; and therefore, though so imperfect in comparison of angels and glorified saints, yet, through grace, I would wish to say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;" and, to all that thou hast done, art doing, and wilt do concerning me, "Amen."

MEDITATION CXXIX.

A CAVEAT AGAINST EXCESS OF JOY IN PROSPECT OF ANY CREATED GOOD.

July 24, 1776.

Such is the corruption of human nature, even in the best, that while we receive the good things of this life,

we forget the Giver, and idolize the gift. On the one hand, we are to think highly of every blessing, who deserve to have our very blessings cursed; and we ought to receive with humble gratitude, every favor who have forfeited all; but, on the other hand, we are always to bear in our mind these few following reflections, which will help us to rejoice with moderation.

1. Created good is always greater in the prospect than in the possession; while the heavenly bliss, like Solomon's glory and wisdom, appears still the greater the nearer it is approached.

2. No worldly felicity can enrich the soul; and many a time the happiest men, with respect to the world, have the greatest leanness in their soul, and, as their outward man flourishes, their inward man decays.

3. Nothing that we receive in the world can keep us a moment longer in it; but many things which we may possess, as riches and relations, make us both unwilling and unfit to leave the world.

4. There is always a want in the most perfect, and a thorn in the most pleasant, of earthly enjoyments.

5. Have we a good name? Lying tongues may ruin it.—Have we riches? These, however well secured, (mind this,) may make themselves wings as eagles, and fly away.—Have we relations, beloved, deserving, and endearing? Death may deprive us of them all, and leave us to mourn alone.—Have we children? They may die young, and set our hearts a-bleeding; or they may live long, and by their irreligious life break our very hearts, when we are bowed down with years.

6. He makes a poor exchange, who takes the creature for God, or gives God less room in his mind, in his meditations, in his affections, that his enjoyments may have the more.

7. Tranquility of mind, and a smiling conscience, are the gift of Heaven; and no enjoyment can bestow them, or compensate the loss when gone.

8 Carnality will spring up at every corner, come in with every good thing, and, like Satan among the sons of God, intrude itself amidst all the graces of the Spirit; so that we have need to be always on our guard.

9. The brevity and uncertainty of human life, as it should dry the tears of the mourner, so it should moderate the joys of all the children of men.

10. According to the talents put into our hand, according to the gifts of Heaven to us, so must we account to the sovereign Judge of all; and our aptness to misgive in every thing, should keep us humble at all times and in all places.

11. Since infinite wisdom has seen meet to bestow very little created good, or earthly felicity, on the greater part of his people, this should teach us to possess the good things of this life with fear, and to rejoice in them with trembling.

12. To be dispossessed of our possessions, to lose our relations, to be dismissed from our posts and employments, and to be bereft of all our enjoyments, is more galling and irksome, than never to have had possession, relation, post, or employment.

13. Created good things we can neither carry with us to another world, draw comfort from in the hour of death, nor secure to our heirs in this world, when we are no more; therefore it is only our vitiated imagination that pictures out such scenes of pleasure in a thing of nought.

14. Confidence in the creature too often accompanies the possession of the creature; yet this is the cut-worm at the root of all our enjoyments; for it is in God, the Giver of all, that all our confidence should rest.

16. The favour of God is our best inheritance, the providence of God is our richest possession; the one can make us happy, in spite of all misfortunes, while we live, and the other can attend our posterity, when we are no more.

16. Finally, our wisdom is to seek to enjoy God in all things, to see him in all things, and in all things to glorify him; to prefer him above all things, and to be fully satisfied with him alone, in the room of all things, relations, riches, good name, peace, prosperity, health, and life, or whatever we enjoy below.

MEDITATION CXXX.

THE JOY OF SALVATION.

Aug. 25, 1776.

WHAT must the joy of the benighted traveller be, that has lost his way, and walks every step in terror of

his life, through the roaring of lions, and yells of wild beasts around him, when the light of the morning scatters his fears, and the rising sun sends the beasts of prey again to their dens? What must the joy of the mariner be, that has sustained a terrible tempest, while the heavens above opened in thunder and lightning, and the ocean raged around in high swelling surges, till his vessel was a very wreck, and he expected to be buried in every returning billow, when at once the storm is changed into a calm, his native country appears in sight, and he arrives safe at his desired harbour? What must the joy of that person be, who, banished into cruel exile, has a long time dwelt with savages, or beasts of prey, when recalled by a royal edict, and invited to dwell among his brethren, and in his father's house? What must the joy of an indigent man be, who, oppressed with poverty, could never call aught his own, when he finds a treasure so rich, so immense, that thenceforth he shall be accounted the most opulent man in the country? What must the joy of the rebel be, who, being outlawed, and a price set upon his head, skulked in continual fear, and trembled at every breath of wind, when the royal pardon gives him his life, restores him to favor, and admits him to his sovereign's presence? What must the joy of the valiant soldier be, who, having stood long in the field of battle, engaged troop after troop, till faint and fatigued almost to death, yet conquers all his foes at last, clears the field, and returns in safety to the spoil? What must the joy of that man be, who has been chained to strife and contention for many years, when blessed with peace around, peace in his own house, and peace in his own mind? What must the joy of those affectionate parents be, whose only son is delivered from the jaws of death? of that loving husband, whose amiable wife is as it were restored to him from the dead? What must the joy of the prisoner be, who has long been confined to a loathsome dungeon, a stranger to the light of day, the sweets of society, and the visits of his friends, when set at perfect liberty, to walk in the light, and enjoy himself with his friends? What must the joy of the stranger be, who has walked whole days over burning mountains, around terrible craters of thundering volcanoes, trembling, lest he sink

amidst the latent flames, or perish by some sudden eruption, when he finds himself safe on the fragrant plain, and charmed with the vineyards that spread around him? What must the joy of the bankrupt be, whose generous friend pays all his debts, brings him out of jail, and allows him a fund that he shall never want again? What must the joy of the infirm, bed-ridden patient be, who has long turned his face from the world, and toward the wall, beheld the grave as his solitary lodging, and taken his farewell of the children of men, when raised from his bed of languishing, his health recovered, and his youth renewed as the eagle's? What must the joy of the criminal be, who, guilty of some atrocious crime, has been condemned to lose his life, and, on the appointed day, amidst assembled thousands, is led forth to execution; when lo! a post, swift as the wings of the wind, arrives with a royal pardon, that swells his breast with transport and surprise, and saves him from death? What must the joy be of persons besieged, and so straitened, and reduced to famine, that they are compelled almost to eat the flesh of one another, or their own, when the siege is raised, and plenty pours in at every gate? What must the joy be of one journeying over burning sands, scorched with the sun, and parching with raging thirst, till like to fall down dead, when a crystal fountain, or flowing stream appears before him? What must the joy of a beggar be, when admitted heir to a wealthy prince? What must the joy of a slave be, who, though loaded with chains, has often felt the rod of correction, when he sees his fetters knocked off, his vile raiment taken away, himself clothed in scarlet, a crown put upon his head, a sceptre in his hand, and himself proclaimed a king? Such, and much more, is the joy of salvation, where sinners are made saints, worms rise into angels, and men are made like unto God.

MEDITATION CXXXI.

ON VISITS.

Sept. 5, 1776.

To make and return visits is both friendly and fashionable; but it is sad, that too often, when we commence

the visitant, we drop the Christian. How melancholy that it cannot be known whether we be Turks or Christians, but by our posture at table! Where the entertainment is remarkable for nothing but noise and nonsense, loud peals of laughter, puns, and buffoonery, it is a poor welcome we give to our guests, and a shameful return we make to our host. If at one table we find profanity, at another folly, he that visits least will suffer least. A whole day spent in mirth, and not one word in any discourse about religion, and not one thought of God in any heart, is an awful blank, and a sad waste of time.

Though at a friendly feast, or social entertainment, we do not meet to preach, yet we should always meet to improve one another in useful knowledge; and a serious "word fitly spoken" might shine "like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Such a conduct might, at some times, though not often, produce the laugh against us; but the approbation of Heaven, and the testimony of a good conscience, will easily balance this. If our company be such, that we can get nothing serious introduced, let us rejoice that they cannot prevent our ejaculations to God, and, in our meditation, let us now and then retire to converse above.

In how many houses, at how many tables, may *Ichabod* be written, Religion is not here; the glory is departed! Whatever table our Saviour, when on earth, sat at, he was sure to enrich it with some heavenly dishes, and fed his audience with sacred truth; so it should be our constant endeavor never to come away the worse of any company, but the better; never to leave any company the worse of us, but the better. Why should not our grace, as well as the impiety of others, like the rich perfume, bewray itself, whether we will or will not? Every where, and every time, at home or abroad, whether we eat or drink, receive or return visits, and in every company, we should do all to the glory of God; who gives us all that we enjoy below, and will at last make us sit down at the marriage-supper of the Lamb, where the converse shall enlarge, delight, and ravish evermore!

MEDITATION CXXXII.

THE ANGUISH OF DAMNATION.

Oct. 15, 1776.

How must their breasts beat, and hearts throb, who are cast into a den of lions, while the savage monsters tear off their flesh, and break their bones in pieces! How bitter must the cry of Egypt have been in that memorable night, when, in every house, the first-born of man and beast lay breathless, and the doleful lamentation was echoed from border to border, and from one end of the land to the other! What must the consternation of Sodom's inhabitants have been, when fire and brimstone was rained from those heavens that used to send down refreshful showers, and where fields of blue ether delighted the eye! How great must the astonishment have been of the surviving Assyrians and their king, when in the morning they found their mighty army only a multitude of dead corpses! What must the sorrow of that man be, who, falling under his sovereign's displeasure, is banished from his nearest connexions, and dearest friends, into perpetual solitude, or the society of monsters and savages! What must the pangs of those parents' be, while their tender offspring are shrieking, groaning, dying, by cruel deaths, under the bloody ruffians! What must the sister, the mother, the wife, feel on the shore, while the ship that carries the brother, the son, the husband, dashes on the rocks below, and they perish, as it were, in their presence! What must the horror of the devoted wretch be, who stands and sees the fire kindling which is to consume him to ashes! What must the terror of a city taken by storm be, when, in every street, young and old, man and woman, perish by the sword, and the air is filled with screaming, lamentation, and groans! What must the amazement of that devoted village be, while from the burning mountain the dreadful lava rolls irresistibly down, and covers and consumes whatever stands in its way! What paleness of countenance, what trembling of limbs, what faintness of heart, must attend the carnage of a field of battle, by an inexorable, but victorious foe! What must the inhabitants of a city feel, when awaked at midnight with the sound of fire

in every quarter, when all they have blazes before them, and some of their dearest friends roar for help, but perish in the flames, while the conflagration is succeeded by a terrible earthquake that shakes the world to its foundation, so that the ground cleaves asunder, swallows up inhabitants and city, and closes her mouth, that they are seen no more! Such, and ten thousand times worse, is the anguish of damnation, when all the Christless multitude shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power!

MEDITATION CXXXIII.

SOVEREIGNTY.

March 28, 1777.

To God, who rules in heaven and earth, belongs a supreme power, and undisputed sovereignty over men and angels. He who is the Creator and Preserver of all, may certainly dispose of all as he pleases. And because we have a near and dear interest in some things, it can never supersede God's better right both to them and us. He bestows blessings on us, at that we do not quarrel; but he removes them, and at this we murmur; yet his right to take is the same as to give. We may smart, but we can never suffer injustice under his hand. Much of our pain, and most of our disappointments in the world, rise from our circumscribed views of heavenly sovereignty. We think that Heavens hould follow that plan of government that pleases us best. And yet he gives not account of any of his matters, and still he does all things well.

Moses begins to deliver his brethren, and smites an Egyptian; yet sovereignty sends him forty years to a strange country, and adds forty years heavy bondage to the Israelites. The kindness of God sends Joseph into Egypt, to preserve his father's family alive; yet sovereignty sends him in such a way, that old Jacob seems to go mourning to the grave, and he that had been favoured with the most heavenly dreams, dreams not a word all this time of his beloved son. Jephthah conquers his foes, but Providence meets him with a sharp

trial in his only daughter, who, at best, must never be married. The favour of Heaven enriches Job, but sovereignty permits Satan to spoil him of all. David is anointed king, but ere he comes to the throne, he is sometimes driven almost to despair of his life. The Jews have liberty to rebuild their temple, and yet, through the malice of their foes, it is retarded a long time. John, our Saviour's forerunner, after baptizing thousands, loses his head through the malice of a woman. Josiah, one of the best kings, is slain in battle in the prime of his life. Zechariah is stoned to death for reproving, in God's name, the transgression of his law. And the apostles, who were the salt of the world, were hungry, thirsty, naked, buffeted, without habitation, made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things! And all these things were ordered by divine sovereignty.

We allow that death must separate friends some time, but sovereignty will take from one parent the child of a span long, from another the weaned child, from a third a pretty boy, from another the promising youth, and from another the comfort of his hoary hairs. Into one family death never enters, but it flourishes up to manhood, and wholly survives the aged parents; into another, death thrusts his iron hand, and carries one away; from a third, he snatches a complete half of the dear little ones; and of a fourth he takes them all but one; while from another he takes one and all. But to give and take health and wealth, friends and relations, blessings and mercies, at his own time, and in his own way, is a part of the plan of God's government of the world. Therefore, we should always expect to be deprived of what we possess, in a moment, or to be prevented with blessings suddenly, as streams of water in the south. Could we commit all we have, all we are, and all we wish, into his sovereign hand, to do with them as he pleases, our concerns should be as secure, and our souls much more tranquil.

If in sovereignty God has passed by some, and chosen me to a crown and kingdom, which in a few years I shall be possessed of for ever, what though he pass by me, and bestow on those the comforts of this life, which in a few years they must be dispossessed of for ever?

Though thy providence should both perplex and pain me, I will never complain, I may sin in my desires, but thou wilt not injure me in thy determination. It shall please me that thou dost all thy pleasure, and my will shall be swallowed up of thine. I have forfeited every felicity? how, then, can I expect to begin heaven on earth? The prospect of heaven may make me triumph over every trouble, every trial, every disappointment in time. In a little I shall be so happy, that I shall almost forget that ever I had less felicity. Such is my confidence in thy wisdom, such my dependence on thy powerful arm, such my expectation from thy fatherly kindness, that I acquiesce in all thou doest and desire to be wholly at thy disposal in all I am, in all I have, and in all I desire. What I know not now, why at such and such a time I lose a friend, why I meet with such and such a disappointment, why such and such a cross is laid on me, I shall know hereafter, one time or other; or I shall know one time or other that it was good for me that I have been afflicted; and when time is no more, I shall know that he hath done all things well.

MEDITATION CXXXIV.

THE VICTORY OF FAITH.

Sept. 30, 1777.

"To him that believeth all things are possible," said he who cannot lie. Why, then, have I so many fears about many things? Would I not cheerfully commit the lot of my friends to the providence of God? Why, then, not commit the hearts of my nearest and dearest relations to the grace of God? Cannot he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine into their hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of his own glory in the face of Jesus? Is God more niggardly of the graces of his Spirit, than of the good things of his providence? Does he prevent with his common kindness the creatures he has made, and cannot he prevent with his special grace the souls he has created?—To him on the throne of his power every creature may look up for protection and supply; but to him on the throne of his grace, we may come with boldness, for grace the best

of blessings, to ourselves, our friends, our acquaintance, to our enemies, to all. To act strong faith in the most important matters, glorifies God most; and the salvation of mine own soul, and the souls of my dear friends, is of all matters the most important. While I seek the salvation of my friends, I seek the glory of God, for in their salvation he is glorified. Then with all the eagerness of desire, with all the importunity of a poor supplicant, with all the boldness of faith, I plead, I wrestle, I implore, that the souls of these my dear friends may believe in the Saviour, who came to seek and to save the lost.

MEDITATION CXXXV.

THE NECESSITY OF AFFLICTIONS WHILE WE LIVE.

Aug. 29, 1778.

THIS very subject, twenty years ago,* has employed my pen; and, whether I write or not, I expect afflictions of one kind or other while in the body. Our afflictions may put on different appearances, according to the different periods of our life, but they will attend us as close as the shadow does the body. As long as I dwell in Mesech, I may expect wars; as long as I attend on sin and vanity, vexation and trouble will attend me. As I cannot be perfect in holiness while out of heaven, so I cannot be perfect in happiness while absent from God. I smart in my sufferings, I feel in my afflictions; but that I should sin before I suffer, offend before I am afflicted, should make my inmost soul to smart. I have reason to fear that I am a very stubborn son, that I need so much correction; but it affords me comfort that I am not disowned as a bastard, but endure chastisement as a son. He that has no long journey before him, but sits still in his own house, may escape the tempest, and hide himself from the storm; but he that sets out for another country, cannot expect always to walk on the flowery champaign, or in the pleasant sunshine, but shall find a river to cross, and a mountain to climb; shall have darkness around him, and thunders roaring

* See Meditation XXXIX.

above him, the tempests attending his steps, and the storm dashing upon him; and perhaps enemies waylaying him: So it is with the traveller heavenward, for through much affliction, and many tribulations, we shall enter into the kingdom.

Again, affliction is as necessary for the health of the soul, as exercise for the health of the body.—Lay a man down upon his bed, and let him never lift his head but to eat and to drink, how soon would he become good for nothing, yea, and lose his own health? Just so, let the saint have no afflictions, and his graces shall soon grow languid, and his soul sick and feeble; but affliction raises us from our sloth, makes us run to God, call in the divine assistance, see the vanity of the creature, and long for the heavenly state. "The wicked have no changes;" well, is their heart filled with glowing gratitude to the God of their mercies? No, but, strange to tell, "*therefore* they fear not God!" On the other hand, the saints are afflicted, and they cleave to God, and keep his statutes better than before.

Corruption is so interwoven with our frame, that in every station, and toward every relation, we may offend; but Providence has so ordered it, that, in every station, and from every relation, afflictions of one kind or other will come; and if they correct us where we err, and mortify our corruption, we ought to welcome them.

The school of the cross is the school of light, and there must all the children of God be taught in their non-age, to fit them for the perfect state of glory. An ignorant person that sees the mariner heaving such a weight of ballast aboard his ship, would suppose he intended to sink her at sea; just so, whatever the world may think, the troubles and trials of the saints shall never sink them, but keep them from being overset by every squall, that they may arrive with safety at the haven of rest, having their anchor fixed within the vail.

MEDITATION CXXXVI.

GIBEON MAKING PEACE WITH ISRAEL.

Nov. 8, 1779.

When Israel came out of Egypt to take possession of the promised land, every thing about them was mar-

vellous and instructive. They approached the land of promise in the time of its greatest plenty, to wit, in harvest, but at a time when Jordan seemed to forbid their entrance, by overflowing all his banks. But the same power that divided the Red Sea when they came out of Egypt, divides Jordan that they may enter Canaan. Just so it shall fare with the Israel of God. Death shall not keep them from their Father's house; and when they enter their heavenly inheritance, they shall find all fulness, even an eternal harvest of glory!

The devoted nations might think themselves secure from the armies of Israel, while Jordan, bursting over his banks, remained such a mighty barrier; but what madness seized them, to combine for battle against a people before whom Jordan's rapid stream recoiled back, and let them pass over dry shod! This madness is only equalled and exceeded by sinners who defy Omnipotence amidst the bright displays of his power, challenges the Eternal to combat, and run on the thick bosses of his buckler.

When, then, men of such an insignificant city as Ai put three thousand of the conquerors to flight, and made them leave thirty-six of their heroes dead behind them, it might perhaps raise the drooping spirits of the Canaanites, and confirm to them, that their foes were not invincible. But, when they hear that Ai is smitten, all the kings on this side Jordan, in the hills and valleys, of every people, and from every quarter, forget their former animosities, and jarring interests, and unite against the common foe! This has been the case in all ages of the world, that the powers of the earth have combined against the people of God, and, in slaying the saints, like Herod and Pilate, have been reconciled among themselves.

But, while this league is forming, Gibeon, a royal city, makes peace with Joshua. Here I speak not of the cheat with respect to the children of Israel, but of the change with respect to the Gibeonites, full of noble lessons and instructions. The inhabitants of a free, a royal city, are made hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for the house of God. But the meanest employment in the palace of a king is honorable; how much more in the house of the King of heaven! Better serve

in God's house, where there is safety, than enjoy the freedom of Gibeon, that ends in destruction.

Though the men of Gibeon seem chief in the embassy, yet they forget not three other cities, where their countrymen dwelt, and all are included in the league. So those that seek mercy for themselves at the throne of grace, will not forget their friends, their acquaintance, their fellow-creatures. In the prayers of every Christian, the salvation of souls, and the prosperity of Zion, will find a place.

The same tidings came to Gibeon, and the kings, but had different effects; the kings prepare for war, but Gibeon sues for peace. Just so, the gospel softens some, and hardens others; is to one the savour of life, to another the savour of death.

When the kings hear that Gibeon has made peace with Israel, they resolve to attack Isreal in their new allies, perhaps under pretence of breaking the league, and deserting the common cause. Thus, when a soul leaves the service of sin, the men of the world, and the powers of darkness, immediately set upon him, and attack Christ in his members.

Gibeon is no sooner in safety by being at peace with Joshua, than she is in danger by the kings around her. So, when a soul has peace with God, he may expect persecution from the world, and through much tribulation to enter into the kingdom.

The kings make war against Gibeon, and Gibeon, who, a few days before, was among the accursed Canaanites can now send to Joshua, "Slack not thy hand from thy servants, come up quickly, and save us." This is a surprising change of circumstances, but disappears before that change, when he who was lately of the family of hell, can send the cry of faith to heaven and say to Jehovah, 'Slack not thy hand from thy servant, from thy son, but come and save me.'

Joshua and his chosen warriors attend, and deliver their new allies from their formidable foes; and, in destroying the five kings that attended to sack Gibeon, a mighty wonder takes place; the sun stands still in the midst of heaven, and lengthens out the day, to complete the glorious work. But, in the work of our redemption, the Son of God comes down, and shines the Sun

of Righteousness in our hemisphere, and will shine through all the gospel-day, till our spiritual enemies are cut off, and we put our feet on the neck of all our foes. Then shall we dwell securely in the land of promise, and serve for ever in the house of God.

MEDITATION CXXXVII.

ON THE AUTHOR'S FIRST USING GLASSES.

Feb. 27, 1780.

Now those that for me look out at the windows begin to be darkened; a sure presage that they shall shortly be closed in death. It is time now that the things of this world should lose their charms, when I must look at them through glasses; and high time that heavenly things should ravish me, since I am so near a future state.

Though my sight needed no such assistance, I might soon sleep in death. But, by my growing blindness, I may see, that I must soon cease to behold man, with the inhabitants of the earth. When the ear grows deaf, the taste dull, the limbs weak, the grinders few, and the eyes dim, to be still charmed with sensual things, is a case melancholy beyond description. The young and strong, since they know that they are mortal at every period of life, should never be surprised by death; but, for an old man, whose senses begin to fail, to be taken at unawares by death, is consummate folly.

In proportion as my sight fails, I must hold objects more distant from me, in order to collect the rays, and view them distinctly; which may admonish me, that the longer I live in the world, the things of time should be seen as standing at greater and greater distance from me; that a final separation between us must ere long take place; and that therefore my meditations should be directed towards another state. If my eye has not been satisfied with seeing good, by this time it may be fatigued with scenes of vanity and sin, and has cause to long for nobler prospects.

Instead of being struck wholly blind by my advance into years, I am only deprived of so much sight, to teach me to prize and improve what is left, and pre-

pare me for losing the remainder in death. While I bless Heaven for this invention, which makes old age so comfortable, I bewail the wastes of my youthful period, which I cannot now recall; but, could I call to the youth of every station, and every land, I would say, Read much, read seriously, read for eternity, while your sight is in its prime. It is affecting to carry mine eyes in my head, and my sight in my pocket, since, if I go abroad without my glasses, I cannot read a word in the book of life till I return; but then, let me have my memory stored with the word of promise, the words of the Holy One.

Such is the vanity of our mind, that we study to conceal our decline in life from our fellow-creatures, who suffer in the same decline, and perhaps are also struggling to conceal it; but, by our use of glasses, we proclaim to all, our walking on the margin of the grave, and that we are grown old.

If accustomed to glasses a while, I may perhaps forget these reflections, and the growing frailty of my frame; but, let me never put the glasses on my nose, without minding that death will shortly lay his hand on mine eyes, and close them up for ever. O! then, as the eye of my body grows daily more dim, may the eye of my soul grow daily more bright, and, forbearing to look on the things which are seen, which are temporal, fix on the things which are not seen, and which are eternal. And when the day comes in which I shall take the last glance of created things, the parting look of all my friends and relations, however near and dear, may my soul, in the broad day of eternity, in the noon-day beams of glory, lift up her unclouded eye. and feast on all the perfections of God, on all the beauties of the Lamb, and be like him for ever, because she sees him as he is.

To some old men their sight returns again, but their youth is departed for ever: So is it this day with me; my youth is gone, and I am well advanced in life, and, in the view of a better life, would bid farewell to this, and welcome old age and death.

The various periods of life that are marked with decline, are but like the stages and mile-stones by the way, that tell me how near I am to my journey's end, to my Father's house; and this of which I now write, is one

of the last stages. But, no matter how frail this body grow, which is to be fashioned like Christ's glorious body, and made spiritual, incorruptible, and immortal; no matter how dim this eye grow, that is soon to see God in mine own nature, and, thus strengthened, gaze with growing wonder, and unabating vigor, on all the glories of the higher house; no matter how these limbs totter, that are to stand eternally before the throne. O how I triumph in the decline of nature, and, amidst the storms of winter, sing of eternal summer from the smile of God! The horrors of the grave, the pangs of my last sickness, and the groans of death, are all but shadowy, imaginary evils, compared with those substantial glories that wait to be revealed on the back of them. No matter, though troubles and trials, though men and devils, though earth and hell, like an army of enraged enemies, attend me to the very gate of glory. Omnipotence shall defend me while in the enemy's country; and, when admitted into bliss, over the wall of heaven, I shall bid defiance to all the furies of hell, and, entering into the joy of my Lord, I shall join in the endless hallelujahs of the hosts of the redeemed.

But when the sinner's sight begins to fail, what can he expect? when his eyes are shut in death, what can he hope for, but to see all the horrors of the pit, all the sad spectacles of damnation, and all the storms and tempests of God's wrath, pouring upon him through an endless evermore.

MEDITATION CXXXVIII.

ON CASTING OUR CARE ON GOD.

April 16, 1780.

Daily, by my anxious cares, how do I discredit these soul-comforting, soul-composing truths, that God cares for his people, that their concerns are his, and that he keeps them as the apple of his eye? Did a kind-hearted Samson go along the way with me, and take my burden from my back, and bear it on his robust shoulders, would it not be impertinent to run up every now and then, to bear up the burden, though forbidden, and convinced that he could carry me above my burden? Just

so, God has commanded me to cast all my care on him, with this sweet assurance, that he careth for me. And he has no more need of my care joined to his care, than he has need of my assistance to support the pillars of the world. Though rolling my burden on the Lord doth not supersede a moderate care, and the use of lawful means, yet I am so to cast my cares on God, as if I had no more concern with them. O how unlike a child of God, an expectant of glory, to have so many anxious cares, and disquieting forebodings, about the things of time, under the pleasing hopes of a happy eternity! My cares may multiply, my concerns may grow, but can never be too many for God. He has borne the cares of his church and people through many generations, and well may I cast all mine on him. God's care of me is always productive of good: but my distrust avails nothing, but gives present pain and future disappointment.—When God kindly claims it as his province to care for me, why should I encroach on his province, by caring for myself? He is a Rock, and his work is perfect, without my anxiety. The stronger my faith is in God, I will have the less care about myself. When I care for myself, I am distracted with doubts and unbelief; but, when I cast my care on God, in the actings of a vigorous faith, I have peace and composure of soul.

Did the king of Great Britain send me a message, 'Make yourself happy, for I will provide for you and yours,' should not I rely on the royal promise, and think myself secure? Then, is the promise, the compassion, the treasure, and the faithfulness, of the King of heaven, less to be depended on than of any earthly king? His care has been extended to a numerous race of my ancestors, since Japhet left the ark, and through Pagan darkness, and Popish delusion, has brought me to the clear light of the gospel; and to this unerring care, both with respect to soul and body, I may well commit my posterity to the end of time. His care fashioned me in my mother's womb, and will not forsake me, now that I am near to be laid in the bowels of the earth.

I know not how far I should extend my care, because I know not how long I shall live. Now, my cares are mostly for events and times to come, and yet I cannot boast of to-morrow; therefore, as no time is mine but the present, so I should have no anxieties for the future.

If I should eat the flesh off my bones with care, it would not alter the plan of Providence towards me; therefore, strong faith, and entire resignation to the disposal of Heaven, are both my indispensable duty, and will be my best wisdom.

"Be careful for nothing," is a command as large and extensive, as it is kind and gracious; that is, have no anxious concern about future period, or apparent losses, about friends and relations, about wife or children, widow or orphan, house or home, food or raiment, poverty or reproach, sickness or death.

So often has mine own care produced nothing but pain and disquiet, that it is high time for me to be ashamed of it, and to give entirely up with it. And so often has the heavenly care done wonders for me, watched over me for good, and done all things well, that on him I may cast my every care with confidence and joy.

MEDITATION CXXXIX.

THE AFFECTION OF A PARENT.

Aug. 17, 1780.

Now that I am a father, and know the affection of a parent, would I not defend from every danger, would I not bestow every good thing, would I not implore every blessing, on my tender offspring? Would I not rear and cherish their infant state, correct and educate their childhood, inspect, reprove, admonish their manhood? Would I allow the dear little creatures to play with sharp pointed knives, to sport on the brink of a rapid stream, or dance about a pit's mouth? Would I permit them to hold in their hand the berries of the deadly night-shade, or to put a cup of poison to their tender lips? However indulgent, would I suffer them to refuse my commands, or spit in my face? And, if they laboured under any disease that threatened their precious life, what pains or expenses would I spare to procure them relief? If assured that a physician lived somewhere, that could heal them without fail, would I not send to the utmost corner of the land? would I not travel to the ends of the earth?

But, hear me, O parents! and let me hear myself;

if our affection end here, we are monsters of cruelty. Would we pluck them from fire and water, and yet permit them to plunge into the fire of hell, and lie under the billows of Jehovah's wrath? Will we snatch from them sword, pistol, or knife, and allow them to wound themselves to the very soul with sin? Will we chastise their impertinence to us, and wink at their spitting in the very face of God, by open acts of sin? Are we fond to have them early well bred to men, and yet let them live in the neglect of prayer, which is the highest disrespect that can be put on the Author of our being? in a word, is this the sum of our kindness, is this the height of our ambition for our dear children, to see them happy in time, flourishing in the affairs of this life, though they should be miserable beyond description through eternity itself? Will their bodily pain excite our sympathy, and we will do all in our power to have their diseases healed, and yet feel nothing, though their souls pine under sin, and they suffer all the pangs of the second death, nor bring them in our prayers to the Physician of souls, to the Saviour of sinners?

Then, were my children ever so many, I have but one, request for them all, and that is that they may fear and serve God here, and enjoy him for ever. No matter though they sweat for their daily bread, (this is entailed on all mankind,) but let them feed on the hidden manna; let them toil and spin for their apparel, but let them be covered in the Surety's righteousness. How would I count my house renowned, and my family ennobled, if there sprang from it not ministers of state, princes or kings, (let potsherds of the earth strive for earthly things,) but pillars for the temple of God in glory, and such as should stand in the presence of the Prince of the kings of the earth, when time is no more.

Again, whatever bowels of compassion I feel towards my tender offspring, such pity will the Lord show towards those that fear him. And though I will not give my child every thing it cries for, or is fond of, yet as I will give it what I know to be good for it, so will our heavenly Father deal with us; why, then, are we so often on the fret?

Again, how does a child confide in his parents? To them he makes all his complaints; he has not the least

doubt of their affection; he boasts of their protection to his play-fellows and thinks himself safe in their presence. Why, then, should the children of our heavenly Father, the sons of adoption, not bring all their complaints to God, rely on his love, boast of his protection, and conclude themselves safe under the conduct of his unerring providence?

MEDITATION CXL.

ON BEING CREATED A PEER.

Feb. 27, 1782.

My readers no doubt, will be surprised at my singular exaltation; and no wonder, for I stand astonished at it myself; the more so when I reflect, that I have never rendered to king or country any remarkable services, that can claim this as a reward. But it is not the first time that the poor have been raised out of the dust to high honours, and lifted from the dung-hill to sit with princes.

A peer of Great-Britain, then, is a great man, and takes his seat in the House of Lords;—has access, free access, into the king's palace, and into the king's presence;—has a vote into the affairs of state,—and letters post-free.—Nor can any creditor arrest him, being a member of Parliament, for any debt.—He has rank and precedence according to the time of his creation.—His king may visit him without any stain to his majesty.—And his children have rank among the children of other nobles.

The world will now account me extremely happy; but I must swell their wonder and raise their astonishment still, while I tell them, that my peerage is spiritual, heavenly, and divine. My heart would not greatly beat with joy for a British peerage; but here I have cause of endless exultation; for henceforth,

1. I take my seat among the saints of God, among the angels of glory; being come to the city of the living God, a place infinitely more noble than the house of Lords, to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born.

2. I have boldness to enter into the holiest by the

blood of Jesus, and palaces of kings are too often sinks of sin; yea, to bring all my petitions to this King of heaven on his throne of grace, who in the time of trouble, (and what is human life but a time of trouble?) shall hide me in his pavilion, and at last admit me into his royal palace with gladness and rejoicing, there to abide for ever.

3. A vote in the affairs of state! This sounds like blasphemy, had not the King of heaven himself said it: "Ask me of things to come, concerning my sons, and concerning the words of my hand, command ye me." And to Moses, "Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot;" as if God would not be wroth, without permission from a praying saint. And indeed, at last, as assessors with the supreme Judge, we shall judge the world and angels.

4. Promises come all free from Heaven, and petitions and prayers are all sent free to Heaven, through the hands of the glorious Intercessor. Our requests for our friends, though removed to the ends of the earth, can be answered, when our friendly correspondence is often interrupted and uncertain.

5. I shall never be arrested by law or justice, because my debts are all discharged; and the Son having made me free, I am free indeed. Even death, that king of terrors, and sergeant at arms, that takes nobles, princes, and kings into custody, shall never arrest me; for he that has ennobled me has promised that I shall never see death, never feel the sting of death, never be hurt of the second death. How many princes and kings would give their crowns at their last moments for this heavenly privilege!

6. Though once poor and grovelling on the dunghill, yet since, by my spiritual peerage, the new birth, I am become precious in his sight, I shall be honourable,—be set with princes, and made to inherit a throne of glory. Some nobles have been their sovereign's favourites, but none were ever their chief ornament, their crown; but I shall be, (astonishing to tell!) a crown of glory to the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of my God. And no wonder I be so high in his esteem, who has given more than Egypt for my ransom, than Sheba and Ethiopia, for me; more than men for me,

and people for my life, even his beloved Son to the death for me.

7. The King of kings, consistently with his majesty, may visit me; for the high and lofty One, who inhabits eternity, and dwells in the high and holy place, also dwells with the humble and contrite soul; and, says the divine Redeemer, "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour; and if a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Nothing on earth bears a shadow of this honour; though crowned heads should visit cottagers, beggars, the condescension disappears before this heavenly kindness.

And, 8. The children of believing parents are federally holy; and though grace does not go by nature, yet in the sight of heaven and earth, the seed of the saints are esteemed. Even the envious Jews, who were enemies to the Gentiles, because the gospel was preached to them, yet, touching the election, were beloved for their Fathers' sakes. How pleasant when a person can say, "He is my father's God, and I will exalt him," "I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid." And even a king that was butchered, had burial bestowed on him by his very murderers, "because," said they, "he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the Lord with all his heart."

In these particulars, there is some similitude between a British peer and me, comparing earthly to heavenly things, though the advantage is all on my side; but in what follows there is no comparison at all.

1. What boundless generosity, and unmerited kindness, appear in my creation! I can plead nothing on the piety of my progenitors; for my first father hath sinned, and so was an Amorite, and my mother an Hittite, and I myself a transgressor from the womb. Tho' pages, and mean-born persons, may have been raised from the dung-hill, and made ministers of state, yet what is that to my attainment? For his mercy is great toward me, and he has delivered my soul from the lowest hell, and, in my spiritual peerage, exalted me to the highest heavens; so henceforth through all generations I shall be blessed.

2. Some have been ennobled for their real services

to their king and country; but the King of heaven needs nothing at my hand, yea, before my spiritual promotion, I was an alien, an enemy, a rebel to his government and glory. Now, though a rebel has now and then been reprieved and pardoned, yet never was a rebel, who had spent his whole past life in acts of rebellion against his sovereign, taken immediately into favour, and ennobled. O the depth of divine wisdom! O the riches grace!

3. A nobleman, on his creation, assumes a new title; and whatever his name be, he henceforth is called, and subscribes himself by his new title, and this is known through the whole kingdom: So, on my spiritual advancement, I am called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord has named; old things are passed away, and all things become new. But in this I excel all earthly peers, in obtaining a white stone and a new name, which no man knows but the happy receiver. O! then, to walk like one on whom the name of an incarnate God is called; like one who, though he cannot name the very day on which he was ennobled, yet knows, that although he once lay among the pots, yet now he sits with Christ in heavenly places!

4. A peer also takes to himself a coat of arms, and a suitable motto. Mine may be a cross and a crown, and the motto, "Holiness to the Lord." But here again, I exceed all earthly peers, for their coats of arms are only lifeless figures painted on their carriages, engraven on their plate, &c.; but in my creation, I am arrayed in complete armour, as my peerage is a military order, and I am no sooner taken into favour, and at peace with the Trinity of heaven, than I commence war, inveterate and unremitting war, with the trinity of hell, sin, Satan, and the world; therefore I am completely armed, having on my head the helmet of salvation, the breast-plate of righteousness, the shield of faith, my loins girt about with truth, my feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. David could not move nimbly in Saul's brazen helmet, and coat of mail; but in mine I walk freely, I fight safely, and sleep softly; nay, so far is it from being an encumbrance, that, if stript of my armour, I would be all in-

activity and languor, assaulted on every side, and foiled by every foe. But I observe that I have no defence for my back, for such a man as I must never flee; and, besides, this spiritual armour inspires me with such a heavenly boldness, that I rush on enemies, and cry out, "I am more than conqueror through him that loved me."

5. When one is made a peer, he must be of an independent fortune to support his rank: But, before my creation, I was such a naked beggar, that I had not a rag to cover me; but now I am arrayed in broidered robes, robes of needle-work; all glorious without by his imputed righteousness, all glorious within by his imparted grace. Besides, to support my dignity, there is a royal pension settled on me, and in such a manner, that I may spend like a prince, but cannot squander it away. I have a right to all the treasures of grace, to all the fulness of God. Now is the time of my minority, during which I differ nothing from a servant, though lord of all: But when the day of glory comes, I shall enter on the full possession of the riches and treasures of glory and bliss, above the conception of the human mind. And, in the mean time, I shall have what is necessary to bring me home to the King's palace. Great men here may have diamond buttons, and buckles set with diamonds; but the city of my King, where he and all his courtiers dwell, has foundations of precious stones, gates of pearls, and streets of gold.

6. As mine is a military order, and all the powers of darkness are in arms against me, I have a noble guard appointed me; not only thousands of angels strong, but God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in all his divine perfections. How safe am I, then, though in the land of enemies, though fighting my way through a dark and howling wilderness! Yea, with such a guard I might march through the midst of hell without harm, and bid defiance to all the fiends and furies of the bottomless pit! This guard is both around my house and my person, so that no ill shall come near my dwelling, and I am always in safety; and, though invisible, is not less august, is not less secure.

7. Peerage among men respects only that kingdom to which the peers belong. A peer of Great-Britain is

but a private person in every other country. He has no right to sit in state-affairs among their nobles, or to vote among their senators; yea, he may not be known by name in the court of Persia, or of the Great Mogul. But I am a peer of the universe. Go where I will, my peerage is in force, my pension is continued, and my privileges remain. Though cast into prison, or banished to some desolate isle, still I am clothed with my embroidered robe, appear in complete armour, and am attended by my royal guard. When the king of England creates a peer, he brings him to equal rank with the other peers, (and sometimes there is a mighty opposition against it, as just now, that it is a stain to the dignity of peerage to confer it on such an unworthy person,) but he never adopts them for sons. Then, sure am I, never was one more unworthy than I, and yet I am not only made a peer of heaven, but an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ, being first adopted as a son; for if once children, then heirs.

8. Sometimes the same king that has raised a person to the dignity of peerage, has been so incensed against him, that by his positive orders, a prosecution has been carried on against him, and he deprived both of honours and life. But in spiritual things it is not so; "for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." When I offend my heavenly Sovereign, he may be angry, reprove, rebuke, correct me, but he will never take his kindness from me, never deprive me of life or honours; and this divine security, instead of emboldening me to rebel, will fill me with the noblest gratitude, never to offend him.

9. The King of Great Britain may raise a Baron to a Viscount, a Viscount to an Earl, an Earl to a Marquis, and a Marquis to a Duke; but I look at length, (and am not accused of ambition or madness,) for a kingdom and a crown! an everlasting kingdom, and a crown that fadeth not away; a crown of life, a crown of glory! There is no comparison, then, between the peers of any realm, the princes of any empire, and me, who am made a priest, a king, and that to God, and through eternity itself.

10. Though peers have access into their king's presence at some times, yet it would be improper if they

had it at all times; it would degrade royalty itself, if they might intrude into their presence any hour of the day, any watch of the night, at their own pleasure. Then, stand still, and wonder, O my soul! at the condescension of the high and lofty One, who inhabits eternity. I may present myself in his presence at the stated seasons of public worship, the hours of private and secret prayer, the retired moments of meditation, and in every company, and on every occurrence, by ejaculation. Yea, what time soever I awake, I may be with God, and rise at midnight to hold communion with him. Now, though the strength of corruption, the weakness of grace, and the cares of this life, are distractions that daily drag me from the heavenly presence, yet the time is coming when I shall dwell with the King in his palace, behold his beauty, and have the most intimate communion with him through all evermore.

11. In this, again, I surpass all the peers of Great-Britain; for, though their dignity is both to themselves and heirs-male, my peerage is personal, and cannot descend to another, (but why should it?) since this heavenly honour secures immortality to me. What a struggle is made for this rank; with what avidity do they grasp at this grandeur, though in a few years they must be stript of all, and laid in the silent grave! But could it confer immortality, or lengthen life to a thousand years, would not the great men turn the world upside down, and barter all they had to obtain it? Here, then, are a blessed immortality, and boundless joys before you. No costly ceremonies, no expensive fees here; only kiss the King's hand on your promotion; kiss the Son, and be ennobled for ever; kiss the Son before his wrath burn against you for your disobedience, like the fiery oven.

12. In this the spiritual peerage infinitely excels every peerage on the face of the earth; for though my peerage can go to none of my relations, yet my parents, my brothers and sisters, wife and children, may all be made peers and peeresses. Yea, several of my ancestors and dearest friends have already taken their seats in the upper house, not of a British senate, but of an heavenly assembly: And this is the grandeur of which

I glory; this is the nobility of which I boast. No matter though their names be not so much as known on the footstool, if they shine before the throne. And it is no arrogance to plead for the same privileges for our relations, our friends, that the King eternal has bestowed on ourselves.

Now, when one is created a peer, however mean he was before his advancement, he is expected to behave suitably to his high rank and station; and many eyes will be on him, the eye of his sovereign, the eye of the peerage, the eye of enemies, and the eye of the vulgar, from among whom he was taken. Just so, if the heavenly favor has chosen me from the scum of Sodom, and the blackguards of Gomorrah, to such rank and dignity, my mind should be humble, but my walk should be holy. I must break off with my former connexions in sin, and forget even my father's house and mine own people. How circumspect in all things should I be, who have the eye of God, of saints, of sinners, and of Satan, on me!

Again, though a peer is not always at court, yet his behaviour should always be courtly. He should act the nobleman in common things; and so should I in all things act the Christian, and adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour, though not always actively engaged in the duties of religion.

Moreover a peer is to attend to his dignity in his company. Though he is never to be deaf to the cries, the requests, complaints, and wants of his fellow-creatures, yet he is not to associate with the low and mean. What appearance would it have for him to come from the royal presence, and sit down, and quaff and carouse with chairmen and porters? still worse to make bosom friends of the king's enemies, and give and receive visits from outlawed rebels. Thus, the carnal are too mean company for me; but to associate with profane and open sinners, and to make bosom-friends of such as avow their rebellion against Heaven, is not the spot of a child of God. The more we are admitted into the heavenly presence, the less will we give our presence to those that know not God.

Again, a peer should not speak the vulgar style of the rabble, but the language of the Court, which should

be the standard of language. So nothing can look worse than for a candidate for glory to speak profanely, obscenely, or in oaths and imprecations, or in excess of passion, or insipid trifling, since his speech should always be with grace, seasoned with salt, to the use of edifying.

Again, he should never be slovenly dressed, but apparelled according to his station. So I, on whom the divine Father has been pleased to put the best robe, should study to be holy in all manner of life and conversation; to keep clean garments, and clean hands, and to keep myself unspotted from the world.

Yet, again, a peer should be of a noble turn of mind. He should not stoop to mean, though profitable employment; he should not trouble himself because some envy his high station, and others pay not that respect to him which is his due; he should be liberal to the needy, and ready to forgive injuries, and scorn to avenge himself, seeing the laws of his sovereign will take cognizance of every insult offered to him in due season. So I should be of an heavenly turn of mind, and scorn to be greatly concerned about earthly things, who have the treasures of eternity before me. How little should I regard the applause or dispraise of a passing world? According to my ability, I should do good to all, especially to those that are of the household of faith; but I should be frank in forgiving injuries, and repaying ill with good. Under the most injurious treatment I may commit my matters to him that will bring forth my righteousness as the noon-day. In a word, though reproach and poverty, sickness and death, rob me of all my present comforts; yet so vast is the heavenly bliss, and so rich the treasures that are secured to me in heaven, that in the very prospect I desire to lose my present pain, and, in the midst of every grief, to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Finally, a peer inspired with gratitude, will exert himself constantly to advance the glory of his king, and the good of his country; so, since exalted to this heavenly honour, the glory of God, the good of his church, and the salvation of souls, will be my daily request, my heart's desire, my daily prayer, and, according to my station, the struggle and endeavour of my whole life.

MEDITATION CXLI.

THE SINGULAR ADVANTAGES OF POVERTY.

Dec. 30, 1782.

THE very title of this meditation may perhaps provoke, at least surprise, many a pious soul.—'What advantage can it be, (may they say,) to be reproached, despised, oppressed, and in pinching straits, all which are concomitants on a state of poverty?' But I beg their patience a little, before they conclude.

"Labour not to be rich," is an inspired direction, but quite disregarded by saint and sinner, by professor and profane; for the unwearied labour of all is for independence, opulence, and grandeur; and repeated disappointments never stop the pursuit, but only vary the plan, and multiply the schemes to attain it.

When heaven is pleased to bless with abundance, my humility, gratitude, and holiness, ought to be conspicuous; but when he is pleased to appoint poverty to attend as invariably as the shadow does the body, then entire approbation of the conduct of Providence is incumbent on me.

The case of the Jews under the Old-Testament dispensation will not apply to Christians under the New; for as their service was more carnal, so their rewards were more of a temporal nature, and both were typical of the more spiritual worship and rewards under the New; yet directions, cautions, promises, and consolations, suited to the poor and needy, sparkle through all the Old-Testament writings, like stars in the firmament of heaven.

Riches cannot give that felicity which is expected by all that are in the keen pursuit of them; and persons in very moderate circumstances enjoy all the comforts of life as well as the rich, and with a much better relish: So that the advantages on the side of riches are rather imaginary than real.

We shall view some of the advantages of poverty by glancing, first, at the hurt that riches often bring to immortal souls.

1. They make men confident in themselves, "We are lords, we will come no more unto thee." There are few that, like Job, can say, "If I have made gold

my hope, or said to the most fine gold, Thou art my confidence: For it is very natural to trust in uncertain riches; therefore the apostle exhorts from it. The rich man is apt to swell in his own opinion; his word must go far, his smile be esteemed a favour, and his very look a condescension; yea, while the poor man's wisdom is despised, his wisdom is genuine and sterling.

2. Pride is often attendant on riches. It is curious to observe how some men's spirits rise and fall with their fortune. Is he in affluence—he is haughty, reserved, and overbearing: Is he in indigence—he is polite, and humble, affable, and even cringing. Nothing is more odious to God than pride, and "the proud he knoweth afar off;" and "them that walk in pride he is able to abase." Again,

3. Dependence on self is another concomitant on riches. Here men sacrifice to their drag, and burn incense to their net. One depends on his own genius in literature, another on his fertile invention for some new thing in mechanics; one builds on his own industry in agriculture, another on his application to business in the mercantile line; and another blesses his good fortune; but in all these things God is neither seen nor acknowledged; and can any other rock be like our Rock, even the rich themselves being judges?

4. Earthly-mindedness is too often a fruit of riches; and there is a deceit in riches that insensibly draws aside from communion with God. When Israel walked in a land that was not sown, he was holiness to the Lord; but when Jeshurun waxed fat, he kicked.

There is, I confess, a variety of cares attendant on poverty; but the cares with which riches are encumbered, are of a more dangerous nature. The cares of the needy naturally point heavenward, and there is a voice in them, that implores the pity, pleads the promise, and claims the protection of God; but the cares of the rich are about their growing sums and worldly affairs: insomuch that Solomon says, "Their abundance will not suffer them to sleep."

5. Distractions, and a multiplicity of affairs, attend on riches, as the shadow follows the body. Generally speaking, the rich are strangers to retirement and solitude, to mental ease and tranquility. Still eager to pos-

sess greater and greater sums, they pursue their worldly affairs with unabating ardor. Perhaps, in the midst of their career, they lose a round sum, and then resolve, if they had made up this loss, that then they will retire from business, and turn religious in their old age. But one event after another continues their chase of created good, postpones their designs, and gives their resolutions the lie; so that they retire from business and life at once, and are no more.

6. The rich have a very hard task to discharge their duty to all around them. They are but stewards over their own riches, and have no allowance to consume aught of it on their own lusts, or on their luxury. The naked have a claim on the fleece of their flock, the hungry to be fed from their table, and the stranger to be lodged under their roof. As much is committed to them, so not only men, but Heaven will expect the more. They must give an account according to their talents; and, being in high station, their example must have influence on others around them; therefore it is incumbent on them, not only to behave well themselves, but to act well to others, in a manner which cannot be expected from the poor.

7. The rich are exposed to snares and temptations, various, and well suited to corrupt nature. Instead of naming them, I bid my readers cast an eye on the lives of the rich in general, (though here and there some of this class are to be found, who serve their God in the abundance of all things,) and they will see how riches procure fuel to the fire of every corruption, and drown men in endless perdition. Stealing has generally been set to the account of poverty; but the real poor, the truly needy, are not the thieves that infest the kingdom; and some, not only in easy, but in opulent circumstances, have been more infamous for knavish practices, than the poorest beggar from door to door, while they have not the least pretext of necessity for their crime. In a word, it is grace, not riches, that can keep men honest from a right principle; and stealing is rather to be placed to the account of depravity than poverty.

I shall now name some of the positive advantages of poverty, that the poor may rejoice, rather than despond.

1. Conformity to Christ in his state of humiliation, who, though heir of all things, had not where to lay his head. Though we are not to refuse what Providence bestows on us, and, like some of the orders of the church of Rome, make a profession of voluntary poverty, from a fond conceit that thus we shall be like to, and accepted of him; yet we are not to murmur or complain, since we, who have forfeited all, are in no worse condition in this world, than the Former of all things was when in our world. Can we call no house our own, but must sleep in a borrowed bed, subsist on a homely, coarse, or scanty meal? Have we small incomes, little cash, and no credit, and depend entirely on the charity of others? Well, so was the Captain of our salvation, who was made perfect through sufferings; and, if we are rightly exercised, our graces shall grow more and more perfect under the various pressures of an afflicted lot.

2. Poverty gives a claim on the compassion of God. None could ever go to a throne of grace, and say, I am rich and prosperous, therefore hear my request. Indeed, chief favorites, and great noblemen, have their requests granted in the courts of kings; but the King eternal "looks to the man that is poor and of a contrite spirit," and who can plead, "But I am poor and needy, make haste unto me, O God." And well may the poor plead with that God, who, by his prophet, has said, "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord;" and says the apostle, "Has not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith?" O the vast odds between heaven and earth, between God and men! Here "the brethren of the poor go far from him, he follows them with words, but they are wanting to him." Thus "the destruction of the poor is his poverty." But what a sweet relation commences between God and the poor! He is their help, their shield, their kind provider; so that, both in a temporal and spiritual sense, "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them; I the God of Jacob will not forsake them." He puts himself down as surety in the poor man's bond, and declares, that "he that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the

Lord;" and as a good surety, he will not fail to repay him. Now, if this noble connexion, and divine relation, will not balance all the perplexity, pain, and reproach, attendant on poverty, to the pious soul, what will do it? In a word, at the general judgment in the great day, the final sentence to the righteous and the wicked will be awarded, though not for, yet according to the kind or unkind usage of his poor, needy, and persecuted followers in the world.

3. The poor have a daily dependence on God; and if their provision were more, their dependence might be less. The rich man in the gospel, forgetting the heavenly favour, builds for futurity on the plenty he had amassed; but his folly is corrected, by his soul being demanded of him in a moment. A servant does not expect that the provision of a week, a month, or a year, should be set in his sight at every meal: he depends on his master, is content with his food, and attends to his service: Just so, why should God's poor despond? It is enough if they are fed from hand to mouth; when the hand of God is seen in their supply, their wants are relieved, and their faith feasted. He is a master whose servants need have no anxious care for futurity. In feeding them from day to day, they have a daily communion with him in his providences, as well as in his ordinances. The 102d psalm is called, "a prayer for the afflicted;" so the fourth petition may be called a petition for the poor, and properly belongs to them; for though we may seek spiritual blessings for all the ages of eternity, yet we are to seek temporal good things only from day to day. And as this petition directs us to be moderate in our requests for created good, so it informs us after what manner, generally speaking, God will provide his people, that it will be *only* from day to day. Hence it becomes absolutely necessary for a saint in poverty, to depend on God at all times, and to depend on him alone. And, by this needy dependence, he puts honour on the power, on the compassion, on the promise, and on the providence of God: nor shall he ever be disappointed.

4. They have a sweet submission to the will of God. Indeed it is grace, not poverty, that can produce this heavenly temper; but when the poor see such a display

of all the divine perfections in their daily supply, such condescension, such care of God concerning them, they approve of their lot, and submit, cheerfully submit, to the divine disposal. The poor not only have good cause to be submissive, but thankful, since to those who improve poverty aright our Saviour has said, in his sermon on the mount, "Blessed are the poor in spirit;" and, in another sermon on the plain, "Blessed are the poor" in state; as appears by the contrast, as he says to those that take riches for their portion, "Wo to you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation."

5. Humility is another attendant or fruit of poverty; and indeed, a poor proud person is as great a contradiction in nature, as to say a sick strong man, or a swift lame man. Pride is so hateful to God, so hurtful to the soul, that poverty is a cheap cure for such a distemper. And humility is so lovely in the eyes of God, and pourtrays such a beauty on the soul, that God condescends to dwell there; while from the proud he not only stands afar off, but knows them afar off. Affluence and prosperity are the soil where corruptions are most luxuriant in their growth; while poverty and affliction are the soil where graces thrive best. It is so natural for the best men to forget themselves, when brought to riches and honour, that infinite wisdom, who knows best what is in us, sees a state of mediocrity, or even of indigence, most proper for the heirs of heaven. And the very word, "an heir of heaven!" is enough to balance all that can be perplexing, afflicting, or calamitous, in our lot below. When Israel walked after God, in a land that was not sown, then he was holiness to the Lord; but, when Jeshurun waxed fat, he kicked, and grew forgetful of God that formed him.

People in pinching circumstances may be apt to think it impossible for them to abuse a state of opulence, would Heaven bestow it upon them. So Hazael, servant to Benhadad king of Syria, stood astonished at the prophet's prediction, that on his advancement to royal authority, he should become a monster of cruelty, and exclaims, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this?" But no sooner does the servant commence a sovereign, than the man becomes a dog. So, oftimes, no sooner does the poor become rich, than he

becomes proud towards man, and impious towards God, to such a degree, that frequently the change is greater in his conversation than in his circumstances. In this respect God deals with the greater part of his people, as a prudent parent does with his child; give him no sharp weapons to play with, lest, in spite of the parent's admonitions, and the child's fair promises, he might wound himself with them. It is true, some eminent saints, (I say but some,) are both rich and in high station; but then grace is given to them, suiting to that very station they are in. And when I find myself in straitening circumstances, I may conclude, that this very state is absolutely necessary, either to suppress some sin that might otherwise sprout up, or to exercise some grace that otherwise might lie dorment, and thus is most conducive both to God's glory, and mine own good.

6. Poverty calls to the exercise of certain graces, which Christians in opulence cannot so properly be actually engaged in, though every saint has every grace in the habit. The rich cannot depend on God for their daily bread, in the same manner that the needy do. And when the poor, in their pinching straits, and repeated trials and disappointments, are enabled to let patience have her perfect work, to a full resignation to, and approbation of the disposal of providence in their lot, and have a sweet recumbency on the faithfulness and kindness of a reconciled God; thereby he is glorified, and their souls enriched for a world to come.

Again, the saints in poverty have a sweet display of a special providence towards them, and the small things, and petty sums they receive, have a relish to them, above the vast and yearly incomes of the rich; because these come, as it were from the immediate hand of God, are the answer of their prayers, and the fruit of their faith. As in an indigent state wants daily return, so faith is daily necessary; and the daily actings of faith on an all-sufficient God, of all Christian graces glorifies God most, putting honour on all his perfections, on his truth and faithfulness, his power and immutability, his wisdom and mercy! And the soul that in the highest degree glorifies God in time, shall be glorified in an higher degree in heaven; for the seeds

now sown with weeping shall yield sheaves of comfort then, and the happy reapers shall rejoice for ever. Now, though the men of the world only connect one time with another, because they have no hope for eternity, yet the saints connect this and the eternal state; therefore, it matters not how much we suffer here, if God may thereby be more glorified on earth, and we more glorified in heaven. If, then, poverty, with the divine blessing, promotes this noble end, can any deny its singular advantages? If the soul goes out towards God, has the world crucified to him, and is crucified to the world; if he esteems the heavenly bliss a sufficient portion, looks not at the things that are seen, commits all to God, welcomes every cross that comes from God, approves of that lot which he appoints, and in every thing depends, relies, confides on God, for himself and his children to the latest posterity; and if he has his little allowance, (for he does not wish for much,) insured in the bank of heaven, (and after generations shall observe it safe, while the great sums amassed by worldly-minded men and misers, are often in a short time so entirely consumed, that their heirs have nothing:) Is he a loser by poverty?

Finally, what though God lead me through a terrible wilderness, and feed me in the wilderness in a manner which the rich know not, since it is to humble me, and prove me, and do me good at my latter end, even to do me good world without end?

MEDITATION CXLII.

A JOURNEY ALONG THE SEA-SHORE.

Sept. 2, 1786.

1. At the commencement of my journey, I must take a passage-boat; and how noble the contrivance, thus to be wafted from shore to shore! Let me see divine wisdom shining in the devices of men.

Here I find old and young, male and female, men of different stations and various employments; and in the safety of the vessel we are all equally interested. This is a picture of human society; for, in the felicity of a family every member should share, in the happiness of

a nation every individual should rejoice, and in the peace of Jerusalem all should triumph.

The sea is a stormy element; the winds roar, the waves rage, and some of the passengers are both fearful and very sick, though others are cheerful and courageous. Thus is our voyage through human life; tempests attack us, various afflictions rage around us, and inward grief and vexation make us sick at the very heart; but some have a more pleasant passage through life, and others, by a steady faith in God, remain tranquil and serene. We meet other passage-boats, and with the same wind we pass them, and reach opposite shores; so saints and sinners, whether adversity or prosperity fill their sails, steer for opposite shores.

2. I find, in some parts on the shore, a scarcity of good fresh water; and yet an ocean of water swells before them. So, some men, in the midst of all abundance, never taste of true joy, or solid consolation. And the whole creation, to an immortal soul, will prove but like salt water to a thirsty man, never able to allay his drought, or ease his grief.

But the inhabitants, having other conveniences, put up with this; and, alas! shall not we often put up with greater losses for trifles? How many sit still under erroneous preachers, rather than forego the least convenience to hear an evangelical minister?

3. Travelling along the coast, I come among some very sinking sands, which makes my journey both painful and tedious; but, when I reach the sands that are often washed with the sea, I walk with ease and delight. So it is safer and sweeter to walk in an afflicted lot, that is often washed with the briny wave of adversity, than in the wealth and ease of the worldling.

4. I find cloth laid down within the sea-mark, to prepare for whitening, and left to be covered by the waves, and so secured, that when the sea retires, the owners find all safe. Even so, afflictions and trials shall prepare the saints for glory; and though, in their own eyes, and in the eyes of others, they may seem drowned in distress, and cry out, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me," yet well does the heavenly Owner know how to preserve, in the midst of great waters, his own, and at last to deliver out of all trouble, and pre-

sent them faultless before his presence with exceeding joy.

5. It is now tide of ebb, and, though the waves roll with fury, and threaten to recover what they have lost, still they retire, till all the shore is left dry; so, O saint! so, O soul! shall it be with thy corruptions; they may rage and threaten to return, but still they shall lose ground, till they shall never more be seen. Though corruptions should seem as strong as ever, yet the time of their continuance is daily growing shorter; and this may be comfort to many a poor soul, that, though sin should rage never so fiercely, still it is but the last efforts, the desperate struggles of a deadly wounded enemy.—But the tide of flood calls to mind the melancholy case of sinners; for, though the waves seem often to recoil and relinquish what they had gained, still every succeeding billow advances further than the former, till the briny surge possesses all the shore; so, whatever checks of conscience, and partial reformations may take place, still the wicked proceed from evil to worse, till the soul is drowned in sin, and lost in perdition.

6. What abundant variety of all things does the sea produce! The ground that lies along the coast is enriched with sea-weeds, and is very fertile; our tables are supplied from the deeps; and sometimes, when the crop has failed, the ocean has poured in its plenty, and supplied the poor. Such is the divine goodness. It is an ocean that supplies all our wants, and still overflows. From him come all our comforts, from him our blessings flow; and still they overflow. He gives grace, and he will give glory: He gives himself, and that is all in all.

7. Fields enriched with every grain, and verdent pastures stored with flocks and herds, are not far off, but my hap is to walk along a barren shore, and to have the foaming billows my attendants; many a traveller has gone this way, and a new road is not to be made for my fancy and pleasure: So must the sons of men, so must I, walk in that very path Providence has appointed me, however rugged, however afflicting it may prove! It is the way, and no other, that will lead to our better country, to our Father's house. To be running every now and then in quest of a more pleasant way, will

only add to my toil, and lengthen my journey; just so, to fret under affliction, and to be discontented with our condition, may make us more miserable, and add edge to our anguish, but can do us no good It is comfort, though the road be rugged that it leads me tothe house of my friend; so, if I arrive at last at my heavenly Father's house, who is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother, I ought to put up with every disaster by the way.

8. I have walked a good way all alone, but I have had company for some miles, but such company, that I welcome my solitude again. Let this be a caution to be slow in choosing companions; and how happy they who have agreeable, godly companions, along the crooked road of life, whose pious colloquies will brighten the day, shorten the way, and cheer each other to their journey's end.

9. Sands that were lately covered with the tide, by a strong wind are now blown in my face; a sudden change indeed! And how soon do people that have been in deep affliction forget themselves, and turn frothy! Our natural vanity and levity is so great, that none but the Searcher of hearts can know it.

10. I find a man sitting in something like a centry-box, and take him for a criminal; but how surprised, on inquiry, to find that he is a kind of judge, and determines disputes on shore. More surprised shall thousands be at the great day, to see the saints, who have been held as criminals, and as such have been banished, beheaded, and burnt, sit judges on the world, and on angels.

11. By nature and art, I find doves dwelling securely in the rocks; the ocean foams before them, the tempests roar around them, but they are safe at home; and, on their nimble wings, fly where they will: So, safe are the saints who dwell in the Rock Christ, in the rock of ages; and on the wing of faith they fly from all surrounding ills, to the heavenly rest, the land of promise, and paradise of bliss.

12. A fine shower falls from heaven, and falls on the salt sea with the same abundance that it does on the fruitful field, or pasture ground. This seems a waste, for the sea cannot become a whit fresher by all the rain that it receives; but who knows but a ship, too long on her

voyage, and grown scarce of water, is catching on her sails the kindly shower, and preserving alive many persons? To how many has the gospel been preached that have never believed the heavenly report? Among thorns, by the way-side, and on stony ground, has the good seed been sown, which came to nothing; but Heaven will be sovereign in his kindness to all, and sinners inexcusable who perish in their unbelief.

13. Innumerable creatures sport in the main, and a variety of water-fowl fly along the shore. There is an element for every creature, and every creature loves and lives in its element. Then, am I an expectant of heaven, and a candidate for glory, and yet wallow in earthly things? If born from above, I shall find delight in spiritual things, and desire to be above.

14. When come in sight of, and not far distant from the house to which I go, a little rivulet presents itself, through which I must go, or be disappointed of the pleasure I promise myself on visiting my friends. I learn there is a bridge for foot-passengers, but neither for horses nor carriages, built by some friendly hand over the stream; but many a traveller knows nothing of this bridge, and so must take the stream, whatever may ensue. This minds me of death, which stands between me and my Father's house, and presents itself at the end of my journey. However terrible it may appear, the prospect of communion with God may make me leap through all dangers. Christ, indeed, has built a bridge for his chosen to pass over; but over this bridge we can carry neither honors, nor riches, nor relations, but, stript of all, must walk alone, under the conduct of our heavenly Guide. But, alas! how few know of this bridge, how few find it, and how many perish in the stream!

15. At last I reach the dear house for which I undertook my journey, and find a hearty reception from all my kind and much esteemed friends. So at last shall all the saints, and so may we, arrive at the house of the living God, and be blessed with the society of saints and angels, and ravished with communion with God and the Lamb. When arrived at this state of everlasting rest, I shall forget the dangers of my journey, and the troubles of my lot; I shall be filled with unspeakable joy in

his presence, and feasted with the fatness of his house for ever.

However happy here, a short time must finish my visit, and I must return the very same way that I came: but the bliss above is everlasting. I shall never quit the society of saints and angels, I shall never go out of his temple, I shall never rise from his banquet, I shall never depart from his throne, never cease to behold his glory, nor be silent in his praise; but my whole soul, in every ravished power, shall be full of God, and go wholly out on God for ever.

MEDITATION CXLIII.

BRITISH STATE-LOTTERY.

March 8, 1786.

I SHALL not here attempt to discuss how far state-lotteries are lawful, or not; but so well does government suit the bait to the ambition or avarice of men, by some capital prizes, that there is always a world of adventurers; and as among them there may be some well-meaning persons, I shall drop a few thoughts for their consideration.

1. We should have a firm belief of a divine, overruling Providence, and no dependence on blind chance. Therefore, such persons are reproved, who, to secure success, rather purchase a share in several tickets, than one whole ticket; but the wheel of providence can turn up sixteen blanks as well as one.

2. We should never adventure from a principle of avarice; for we cannot ask from Heaven what we have no use for; and it is not safe to have any thing under the sun but from the kind hand of God; so, when we adventure, we should have the call of Providence by some pressing circumstances we are in at the time.

3. We should never buy deep, but such a share as will neither hurt our circumstances, nor ruffle our temper, though it turn out a blank.

4. If we be rich, and will support government by purchasing in the lottery, if it turns out a prize, the greater part thereof should be laid out in pious and charitable uses. What good might thus be done to numbers of needy families, and unfortunate persons!

5. Our expectations should never be high. Often even a capital prize has done more ill than good to the receiver. The provision of kind providence is better for our children than any sum; and there is a blessing on that which is got with honest industry.

6. If, after waiting some time, and expecting a little sum to help us out of some pressing strait, we only get a blank, yet, let us still consider, that Providence is neither exhausted nor nonplussed; and that though this, and that, and the other scheme fail, he never fails his people.

I shall next give a caution or two.

1. If a prize is drawn, (1.) Talk not of good luck, but acknowledge Providence, for nothing comes by chance. (2.) Be rather humble than high-minded, more afraid of hurt to your soul, than assured of advantage to your state. (3.) Infer not from your good success that you are the favorites of Heaven, for "no man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before him." (4.) Implore the blessing of Heaven to come along with it to you and yours. Without this how many have suffered very much by the sudden accumulation of wealth? They have been taken out of their proper sphere, turn giddy-headed, and squander away what they possessed, till, with shame and anguish of mind, they sink to that station from whence they arose, or lower. (5.) Do not think much of what heaven thinks so little of, for often riches are bestowed on the basest of men, and are employed to the worst of purposes; they can procure no quiet to a wounded conscience, cannot avail a person tossing on a death-bed, a sinner trembling before the judgment-seat, or an immortal soul through eternity.—(6.) Keep a memorandum of your resolutions, both as to the frame of your mind, and your bounty towards pious and charitable uses, which often read over, and never depart from.

2. If a blank or a trifle is drawn, (1.) Acquiesce cheerfully. You may be in the wrong in attempting to be rich in such a manner. But, should conscience acquit you, still give God the honour of his sovereignty, who does whatever he pleases, and gives no account of his ways. Give him also the honour of his

wisdom, who knows best what is best for you, and do not prescribe to Omniscience himself. (2.) Consider, that often those children do best that have no large sums from their parents. Now, it is often more for our children than for ourselves that we seek riches; yet, how often have the riches of the parent been a means to ruin the character, the morals, and the very constitution of their children!

But now, to compare earthly with heavenly things,—can we be so happy in the mere expectation of a prize, where we may be readily disappointed, and not exult in the heavenly treasures, which can never deceive us? Can we find such pangs of joy in a prize of 20,000*l.* which we may spend to a farthing, and must leave behind us, and yet our hearts not beat with rapturous joy at the heavenly gift, at the pearl of great price, being eternally our own? If a little of this world place us in such easy circumstances in life, how enriching the treasures of glory! Let me accept only, and the bank of bliss will bestow, not the trifling sum of a few thousands, but durable riches and righteousness. There is no blank here to stab our expectation, and sadden our countenance; no, but a kingdom and a crown, endless bliss, and endless glory. The greatest sum now cannot prevent me from becoming a bankrupt; but, instead of spending my celestial stores, they cannot so much as be counted or told; but a few figures will contain all the sums that were ever lost or gained in every state-lottery, in every land. How poor the richest mortal! how rich the meanest saint! Earthly things only please an earthly appetite, but here the joys of paradise, the bliss of angels, and all the perfections of God, feast and ravish for ever.

Had this lottery no blank, how numerous would the adventurers be! but the heavenly liberality has no blank, none shall be disappointed, but have prizes, large as wish, and boundless as desire.

Here, if a person gets a prize, or a share in a capital prize, it is the most that he can expect; but those who will accept of the heavenly bounty, shall have every enriching prize, (not for the short period of sixty, eighty, or an hundred years; he shall have pardon,

of sin, peace with God, growth in grace, joy in believing; in a word, heaven, and all the joys of paradise; endless life, and all the glories of eternity; and God and his infinite fulness, world without end.

MEDITATION CXLIV.

ON THE WORKS OF CREATION.

Jan. 20, 1790.

BEFORE I enter on this meditation, I premise a few things: 1. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, the best, the noblest of all knowledge. 2. Many a pious soul has gone, and many may go to heaven, that knows but little of the theory of the starry firmament. 3. The belief or disbelief of these things is merely indifferent with respect to the concerns of salvation. 4. As our salvation depends nothing upon such a knowledge, we can expect no account thereof in revelation. 5. By way of analogy, however, comparing that part of creation which we know not with that part which we know, I have as firm a belief of these things, as of any thing else that comes not within scripture-authority, mathematical demonstration, or historical narrative. 6. Great philosophers, surveying the works of creation, may have their heads full of shining knowledge, and yet at last arrive at the darkness of eternal night.

Every thing is full of God. How is our earth replenished, air and seas crowded with inhabitants! Every blade is covered with life, and every liquid abounds with animalculæ; so that we have and endless field for admiration, gratitude, and wonder, on our terraqueous globe.

But why should we think our earth the only planet in our system that is peopled? If we are not so near the sun as some of the other planets, we are attended by a moon, while some that are more distant still have four or five moons, and are of tremendous magnitude, compared to our globe. Why, then, should one primary planet only of seven, and it neither the least nor the largest, neither the nearest to the sun, nor the most distant from him, be inhabited, and all the rest desolate

and empty? Philosophy *can* give no reason, and revelation *does* give none. Now, to a mind that would admire the glory of the Creator, what a noble prospect is our system! So many worlds of intelligent creatures, living on his providence, and paying him the tribute of praise! the philosophers in every planet, inferring, that the rest must be inhabited as well as theirs, and with growing wonder adoring the supreme Creator of all!

Moreover, at immense distances on every hand, beyond all the planets of our system, we see a great many fixed stars with our naked eye, and by the help of telescopes, millions more; and the better the glasses are, still more distant and starry firmaments, rich treasures of creating power, are brought into view, and astonish every beholder. How vast the survey may still grow, as glasses may be further and further improved, I shall not dare to conjecture. Let us, then, suppose their present number, as is by some supposed, to be seventy millions, and that every star is a sun, as big and as bright at least as our sun. As our sun, which is but a star to them, is the centre of a system, and affords light and heat to all the planets that roll round him; so these globes, which are no more than stars to us, are suns to their own systems. That never a planet in any of these systems has been seen, or can be seen, is no argument against their existence, since some of the planets in our own system have escaped every astronomer till of late; and who can tell but that more worlds still, in some future period, may be found to belong to our system? And, considering that they are at such a vast distance, that a sun appears but a star, how can planets, that shine with a reflected light be seen? Now, if we suppose every system, like ours, to have seven primary planets, what an immensity of worlds this! Four hundred and ninety millions of worlds, all inhabited with rational creatures! And if, again, we suppose the inhabitants of every planet to be as numerous as in our earth, here calculation is baffled, and conception fails! If the king's honour be in the multitude of the people, what honour must belong to the King of kings, who not only can claim the cattle on a thousand hills, but the inhabitants of millions of systems, and all the angels of light?

It is calculated, that seventy or eighty thousand die day by day in our earth; but let us suppose that only a thousand daily are translated from every world, yet thus the number that arrive at the world of spirits for one day, is four hundred and ninety thousand millions! No arm but an omnipotent can support such legions, no eye but an omniscient can survey the whole. Well may we, with astonishment, join Bildad, and cry, "Is there any number of his armies? and upon whom does not the light" of his glory "arise?"

In contemplating such a plurality of worlds, a pleasant prospect opens, that perhaps sin is only known in our earth, but that all these continue in that state of innocence in which they were created. Often have we been difficulted to see the goodness of God over all his works, while we behold such multitudes of human souls going down to the chambers of death; and understand, that for ages the worshippers of the true God were confined to the nation of the Jews and a few proselytes; and even in the more extensive spread of the gospel, to so few nations is the Christian name hitherto confined, that it may be said, The world lieth in wickedness!

But how pleasant to reflect, that while, in sovereignty, the sinners in our globe shall feel the wrath of a tremendous Jehovah, all these millions of inhabited worlds, retaining their primitive innocence, walk in the light of his countenance, and sing the praises of their adored Creator! Now, though our whole system were both sinful and miserable, how small is it among so many! But when sin is known only in one planet, and but a part of the inhabitants of that planet left under its fatal influence, we may infer, that all the sons of perdition are but like the small dust of the balance to the totality of happy beings!

Should it be objected, How do we know but that sin has made its way into many, or into all these worlds? I answer, From the holiness and goodness of God, who will never suffer sin to take place where it cannot be counteracted. As God is the first cause and last end of all, so he cannot but make all things for himself, all things for his own glory. Now, sin can never be for his glory, (for, as it is sin, it strikes against his holiness, and, as it plunges his creatures into eternity, it strikes

against his goodness,) except where, by permitting it, he can manifest the glory of all his divine perfections, in condemning sin, and saving the sinner by a Saviour.

Should it be further objected, That sin entered among the angels, but those of them that sinned have no Saviour, I answer, 1. That but a certain number of them sinned; and, 2 That their sin is connected with the sin of man; hence Christ is said to be "manifested to destroy the works of the devil." Now, as sin could be taken away by nothing less in our world, than by the sacrifice of our incarnate God, so sin could be expiated by no other sacrifice in any other world. But Christ cannot be personally united to more than one nature, for union to a plurality of natures, souls and bodies, would be confusion in the person of the Son; therefore he cannot be the Saviour of any more worlds than ours. So, if sin entered there, they must all perish for ever, which is contrary to his goodness; hence we conclude, that they, like our first parents, were created in holiness, and confirmed in their innocence, like the angels that kept their first estate.—From this view of creation, we may infer,

1. How great must the Creator be, in the hollow of whose hand so many millions of inhabited worlds do roll! How prolific every hour of the six days creation! What multitudes of holy angels admiring these works worthy of a God! To fallen angels we cannot give a number, though it is properly very great, as we find a whole legion in one man; but, in Rev. v. 11. we read of an hundred millions of angels round the throne; and how many more they are, none can tell, as this is only a definite for an indefinite number.

2. Hence we may see the beautiful connexion that takes place through the whole creation. All these suns, though very remote from one another, shine to the nearest systems as stars; thus each of them has a primary and secondary use, to shine as a sun to their own system, and as a star to the systems around them.

3. What madness would it be in the sinners of our earth to marshal themselves in battle-array, and declare war against all the inhabitants of all these worlds, (supposing they could meet, since every individual would have to encounter millions and more? But they are

chargeable with more desperate madness still, who, by their sin, challenge to combat the Lord of hosts, the Lord of the armies of universal nature, and run on the thick bosses of his buckler, whose arm is omnipotent, whose blow is irresistible, and whose displeasure is death.

4. Suppose but one million of these suns collected into one constellation of stars, one cluster of burning orbs, what a tremendous effulgence, what a deluge of light, and blaze of glory, would it give; unless at a very great distance, no human eye could behold it. Yet how would all this insufferable brightness disappear before the heavenly glory! When the Judge shall at last descend, attended with millions of angels, I make no doubt but the glory of every angel would darken a sun; what, then, must the light of the New Jerusalem be, which the glory of God shall lighten, and whereof the Lamb shall be the light!

5. How mean is it in a saint of God, in an expectant of glory, to have his temper ruffled, or his countenance saddened, by a few ill-natured and malicious neighbours! to forget the meekness of the gospel, by the ill-usage of sinners! since in so short a time he is to join so sweet a society, where there shall not be one waiting for his halting, nor a jarring opinion in all the millions of glory!

6. What must be the power that made, and the wisdom that governs all these worlds! In what a blaze of glory must the Creator appear, who has kindled up so many millions of suns, and kept so many millions of planets regularly rolling around them, and even wandering comets, so that not one, through so many ages, has mistaken its course! Kingdoms and churches, and families, may dwell secure under the sceptre of such a King, under the providence of such a God; and every individual of the human race may commit his way to him, without an uneasy thought, an irksome murmur, or an anxious wish.

7. When sinners on every side create us sorrow, let us reflect, that even from this earth at last the ransomed of the Lord shall be a great multitude which no man can number. What, then, must the heavenly assembly be, the people of so many millions of worlds, and

all the hosts of holy angels, all in the presence of God and the Lamb, and all shouting his praises through an endless evermore!

8. Creation is the admiration of men, of philosophers; but redemption is the wonder of angels, the *ne plus ultra*, the furthermost that God can go. Had he pleased, he could have created still more and more worlds; but he could give nothing better, nothing more than his Son. In creation, his wisdom, his power, and his goodness are manifested; but in redemption, his manifold wisdom, his mighty power, his spotless holiness, his unbounded goodness, his inflexible justice, and his invariable truth, shine forth, and will shine, while the ransomed sing before the throne. And here the astronomer and philosopher are reproved, that survey the whole creation, but stop short of God; or are filled with wonder at the works of his hands, but never have their hearts filled with gratitude at his love and grace in redemption.

9. However God may shine in the works of creation, still he shines with uncommon, unrivalled, unparalleled lustre in the work of redemption; for, to save one soul is more than to create all these worlds. He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast: he said, Let it be, and light, and suns, and systems, replenished part of the mighty regions of space; but nothing less could ransom sinners, than his own eternal Son, united to human nature, and sustaining unutterable agonies, the acutest sense of divine wrath, and thus expiring on the accursed tree! O astonishing price of our redemption? Though all the millions of angels round the throne, and all the sinless inhabitants of these four hundred and ninety millions of worlds, had been sacrificed for the salvation of one soul, that soul, notwithstanding such a sacrifice, must have perished for ever; for it is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin. And on a level stand all creatures here, from the highest angels, through every rank of intelligent beings, because all are creatures still. I see, then, that my Redeemer must be a divine person, (and there is not greater and lesser, no semi-divine in deity,) that he must be the supreme, the self-existent Jehovah. And shall I cast away my soul for ever, a soul of such value, for phantoms, for shadows, for nothing?

10. How should an immortal soul rise superior to all the trifles of creation, the pageantry of high life, and the splendors of royalty, and expand every power, of the soul, every mental faculty, to the improving society of those holy multitudes that daily arrive at heaven, to the fellowship of millions of angels, and to eternal communion with God!

11. What must the wicked feel at last, when in the presence, (for aught we know,) of all these assembled worlds, in the presence of men and angels, they shall be loaded with infamy, condemned to the abodes of horror and despair, and thus punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, displayed in the grand work of redemption, and in the creation of that vast multitude of worlds! Not only cut off from this dear society of holy angels, and happy innocents, from all these worlds, but banished the divine presence, and pursued with burning wrath for ever.

12. What a noble prospect opens beyond death to every saint, who by nature is a social creature; for grace destroys not nature, but purifies and exalts it! In the celestial levee, among immortal grandees, in the court of the King of kings, they shall enjoy the divine presence! Though now the presence of one sovereign is courted with avidity, yet to be admitted into a congress of all the kings and potentates of this world, would be but a lean honor, and unsubstantial glory, (though no individual ever attained to it, nor probably ever will,) compared to that renown that attends admission into the general assembly and church of the first-born. As all these systems were created at one and the same period in the beginning of time, so at one and the same period time may end to them all, and eternity begin. And then, how august the assembly! how delightful the song! and how vast their felicity, none can tell! Again, though all these worlds can claim a covenanted God, yet the redeemed from among men can claim an incarnate God, and have notes in their hosannas which neither angels nor any other can imitate.

How the blessed will be employed in eternity, we cannot say; but as God is every where present, so they will find heaven every where; yet, where the God-man,

God in our nature, shall dwell in the bright effulgence of his glory, there shall the redeemed from among men assemble; and wherever they go, or whatever they do, they shall enjoy God in a manner that will make them happy above conception or thought.

I offer a few thoughts more, and leave them with the reader.

1. The divine essence, filling immensity alike, wherever he manifests his glory, and communicates his goodness, there is heaven. Thus the angels, being blessed with uninterrupted vision and fruition of God, though employed on messages to our earth, are always in heaven, and yet earth is not heaven.

2. It seems to be the general opinion of divines, that neither sun, moon, nor stars, nor our earth, shall be annihilated; but the world at last shall be purified by fire, and appointed for some noble use by the supreme Disposer of all things.

3. If in this new earth righteousness, (that is, the saints or righteous ones,) shall dwell, who, like the angels that come from the realms of bliss, shall, though inhabiting the earth, dwell in the very heart of heaven; so, after the general judgment, the inhabitants of all these worlds shall dwell in their distinct globes; yet all these numerous worlds shall make but one heaven, one commonwealth of bliss, and be for ever blessed with the vision of God's glory, with the communications of his goodness.

4. Who can tell but that in eternity there may be some grand festivals, some august solemnities, when the inhabitants of all these worlds shall assemble to worship him in universal chorus, who truly is the Lord of hosts, and to pay special honours to the man Christ, who, because he humbled himself to the death, the death of the cross, has a name given him, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess, through heaven and earth, and universal nature; even as in the church below, several congregations may meet at one sacramental solemnity. What a glorious sight will this be in the eyes of every adorer! and how will the redeemed from among men rejoice to see their incarnate God exalted as Head over all! And what a field of wonder, what a flood of ecstasy, will

pour into these innumerable millions, when the mystery of redemption is revealed to them, which things the angels, bending down from their heavenly orbs desire to look into! But with what wonder, astonishment, and holy indignation, will they be filled, when informed that there are some intelligent beings that once boldly impugned the Deity, and denied the divinity of the Son, the second person of the ever-adored and undivided Trinity! and that the miscreants should be not only of that world he condescended to save, but of that very society that did bear the Christian name!

5. Though they can never retire from the presence, the enjoyment of God, yet they may retire from this congress of systems, this assembly of worlds, with an increase of knowledge, of love, and felicity, and improve for the next convocation which may be made by a solemn peal, rung by archangels, or the sound of a trumpet; for if the sound of a trumpet can awaken the dead, it may well assemble the living.

6. When the inhabitants of all these worlds assemble again around the heavenly standard, with what additional lustre will they shine to one another! Even in Heaven wisdom makes the face to shine; and as their researches into God are unremitted, so their growth in knowledge will be constant. And though all are employed in studying God, yet some may have some sweet display of one divine attribute, others of another, which they may communicate to each other, to their mutual joy, and increase of knowledge: Just as ministers of the gospel now, though their search may be after all truth, yet one may have a bright discovery of one truth, and another of a distinct truth, and so on, by which they may improve and edify one another. Thus, every time they assemble, it will be with additional degrees of knowledge, felicity, and glory.

Moreover, the angels, these heavenly courtiers, that have explored the God-head for many thousand years, will communicate their knowledge to all the happy adorers; for, in the world of spirits, every intelligent being can freely converse with one another. But, above all, Jesus, who has been the prophet to his church in the militant state, will continue to be her prophet in the triumphant state, and, as far as his divine wisdom

sees fit, will unfold to them more and more the mysteries of grace, the magazines of glory, the arcana of Deity, the secrets of God.

7. As all these worlds are but like the cities of one kingdom, the states of one republic, the members of one family, and the servants of one God, may not the inhabitants, being nimble as the angels of light, visit one another? But, O how different from the visits below! A blaze of heaven will shine around them wherever they go, the praise of God fill every mouth, and his glory shine in every countenance. Thrice happy guests! They will set out from world to world, swift as angels, or quick as thought; and to hear, and speak, and learn still more and more of God, will be their constant employment, and soul-refreshing theme. If the sweets of society and friendship be esteemed among the sons of men, how shall the sweets of sacred friendship and sinless society be esteemed among the sons of God!

8. May not we suppose poor sinners, who are shut up in the gulf of hell, to be like state-prisoners, who hear their offended sovereign passing in triumph, attended by his loyal nobles, and happy favourites, but no ray of hope for them; who, therefore, gnaw their very chains in the anguish of despair, and, with redoubled howlings, and severest remorse, bewail themselves banished for ever from the glory of his power, that shines in such an assembly, that beams brightly in redeeming love; and shall feel the superadded sense of divine displeasure teeming into every power and faculty of the soul for ever. Oh! how must the torments of sinners, the anguish of damnation, be heightened, sharpened, and screwed up to the highest pitch, by this sad reflection, that their state is fixed, and their misery shall endure to all eternity, in the fullest meaning of the word, in spite of all that witless votaries for hell have said to the contrary!

9. Wherever the saints, the ransomed of the Lord, may dwell, it must be in heaven, and they shall be blessed with the presence of the man Christ; for he is their Head, and they are his members. Angels, and all the happy worlds, are related to him as their Creator and supreme good, but the saints claim him as their

Brother, their Husband, their Head; and, by this relation, have an honour superior to any other created intelligence; for "he took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham."

10. Whatever delight and satisfaction all these intellent beings may find in searching into the wonders of creation, into that astonishing variety that may prevail among the inhabitants of the numerous systems (since even among the angels that are all immaterial beings, we find thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, angels and arch-angels, cherubim and seraphim;) yet, every happy adorer will join the psalmist of old, "Whom have I heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth," none in all the systems, none in any world, "that I desire besides thee." And tho' the students on divine subjects shall be innumerable, yet every divine perfection, being infinite, shall afford them ample scope for their searches. For I am of opinion, that their knowledge shall be so acute and comprehensive, that the motions, laws, and universal connexion that the systems have with one another, shall be familiar and easy to them. But, with what growing wonder, and holy delight, shall they admire that Power that produced such numerous worlds from mere nothing, pure nonentity! and called such mighty spirits as the angels into being with a word! And how will the most penetrating geniuses of angels, or of men, or other intelligent beings, find themselves lost in searching into his self-existence and essence! His is so infinite, that it defies, and will forever defy, their researches, and, compared with him, all these millions of angels, and millions of worlds, with their inhabitants, are but as an atom to space, or a point to ubiquity! In this infinite essence, the happy inquirers will find glories for ever new! Moreover how will they be completely ravished to think, (though no creature can understand how,) that this great God, in three consubstantial, co-equal persons, must have existed from a necessity of nature, from a necessary perfection, and must have existed with all the necessary attributes of infinity, omnipotence, omniscience, an immutability, as well as holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, from all evermore! Likewise, the works of providence in

every world, and respecting every individual, will be a noble theme to the heirs of felicity; and, among these works, the salvation of sinners, by the incarnation, sufferings, and satisfaction of the Son of God, will be the wonder of all the glorious intelligences, as well as the song of the redeemed.

Finally, the Lord shall rejoice in all his works, and his glory shall continue for ever; while to millions of millions he communicates of his goodness through eternity! compared with whom, what a small handful shall underlie his burning indignation for ever! But, O melancholy thought! perhaps my dear acquaintance, my daily companions or my near relations, may be among the unhappy persons! O that they may be made to flee from the wrath to come!

To add no more, how dark are our views, and how ignorant are we of the world to come! But this may fill us with solid joy, that it is wholly in his hand, who will make his people happy in and with himself for ever, whose presence is fulness of joy, and to be at whose right-hand is pleasure evermore.

MEDITATION CXLV.

A PROSPECT OF DEATH.

A DISPUTE has long subsisted between my mortal frame and death; and though I have long maintained the struggle with a life subject to disease and pain, I must at last yield to the universal conqueror, and be led to the house appointed for all living. In a little, the king of terrors will advance toward me, harnished to slay, and I shall not always escape the keen destroyer. But here is the comfort of a Christian, that he may die, and yet not be hurt of the second death; yea he may enter undismayed the lists with him who is the terror of kings, as with a conquered foe, and with cheerfulness view the silent grave; for though his dust rot, yet his hope shall flourish for ever. O what an unspeakable privilege is an interest in the Son of God, whereby that which sets the secure world a trembling, fills the believer's mouth with songs of triumph! Happy would the wicked be, if freed from the fears of approaching death; but this

advancing day, when he is dissolved, to be with Jesus, kindles joy in the believer's breast.

Reluctant nature, indeed, may struggle in the last pangs, but disclosing glories shall scatter every gloom. My relatives may weep about me, but my soul shall be all harmony within. My body may toss and tumble on a death-bed, but my hope shall be fixed within the vail. Mourning and weeping may attend my decease, but my departed soul shall soar to everlasting song; and, while my sad friends inter my lifeless clay, my immortality shall enter into the joy of my Lord. Such views as these refresh the expectant of glory; and whatever clouds may darken his evening sky, yet his state is secure, and he shall never walk alone, through the dark shadow, the solitary valley of death. The same divine Saviour, who has been a cloud and a shadow to him all the days of his life, will also be the shining of a flaming fire to him in the night of his death. Hence dissolution itself, like the cloud of old, when kindly interposed between flying Israel and pursuing Egypt, though it be terror and darkness to depraved mortals, yet it is joy, light, and transport to adopted sons.

If, on the approach of the decisive moments, fierce disease will allow my soul so much tranquility as to think, with what delight will I bid the world adieu, how will my joys swell to see myself on the brink of an eternity of glory! And, if I can use my tongue, how shall my dying breath speak of the excellences of my divine Redeemer, and commend religion to the sons of men! How shall I expatiate on the bliss, the entrancing joys found in his presence, even below, when the soul dwells with great delight under his shadow, and eats his fruits, while paradise blooms around him! How shall I also endeavor to set forth a little of that triumphant state that is before the throne! Then, taking my last, mine eternal farewell of all created things, I shall fix my soul on all the boundless bliss, and everlasting glory, that is in his presence, and, while he graciously begins to shed eternal noon about me, shall breathe my soul out among his beams, and rise in his irradiation to the very throne.

MEDITATION CXLVI.

A STATE AFTER DEATH.

INDEED, the most part of men live as if there were no futurity, no hereafter; as if they should altogether drop out of being the moment they drop their mortal frame. But, notwithstanding the confined views of depraved mortals, a noble prospect opens beyond death, the hope of the heaven-espoused breast. Surely, as the prisoner, long detained in the dreary dungeon, when allowed to pass the envious door, to be possessed of liberty once more, looks with delight on unbounded fields of day, and, with a kind of greedy joy, glances the whole surrounding skies; so, when my soul, through the door of death, shall escape from this clay prison, in which I daily groan, and pass through the confines of time, I shall rise at once into eternity itself, look round on fields of light, on floods of glory, and, with the overflowings of an holy joy, see felicity, in its infinite plenitude, measure with eternity above.

What matter, then, though my dust mingle for a while with the earth, and my memory perish among the sons of men, if mine immortal soul, all activity and life, be going out unweariedly in praising the Fountain of glory, and well-spring of salvation? If my death be happy, mine eternity shall be blessed; if his beams dispel the darkness of death, I shall walk in the light of his countenance for ever. In that state of bliss, all my bliss shall be according to the state of the King. I shall live in his smile, and be ravished with his emanations; I shall walk in his light, and be conformed to his likeness. I shall drink of his pleasures, put on his strength, and partake of the divine nature! O how every power of soul shall burn in his beams, brighten in his glory, and kindle in his love! Then will this dying worm begin to live after the manner of angels; then shall this lukewarm soul love in a degree a-kin to seraphim, and join in the raptures of the harpers before the throne. Here, in his sanctuary, have I seen some of his steps of majesty, but there shall I behold him in all his glory, and my soul shall have, through his own amazing condescension, such refined apprehensions, such a clear

and lively knowledge of him, that I may be said to "see him face to face, and to know as I am known." There I shall walk in white in the presence of the undivided Trinity, and shall enjoy communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for ever. I shall admire all his dazzling glories, adore all his divine perfections, and be possessed of pleasures large as my wish, pure as the bliss of angels, immortal as my own soul, and liberal as the bounty of the glorious Giver.

Again, whatever glorious things and sacred bliss I am possessed of, this adds to its excellency, that it is eternal; while my toils shall all dissolve in endless rest, my griefs in everlasting joy, and my sorrows in eternal songs.

Surely, when I see such a state before me, I am astonished that my state below, whatever it be, should trouble me, more than a bad day or dirty way should incommode a king going to his coronation; and that happiness of which I am an expectant as much transcends his, as his does that of the most wretched galley-slave. Then, at that day when the world shall say of me, He is no more, I shall begin to be what will crown my highest aim, and satisfy my whole desires, even an abiding inhabitant in the world above, where I shall enjoy God, the inconceivable good, in an inconceivable manner, through endless ages. Then, a few moments, and in this world I am no more; and again, a few moments, and, if my hope deceive me not, I am there for evermore.

MEDITATION CXLVII.

A GLANCE AT THE GLORIES ON THE OTHER SIDE CREATION.

All at once I find myself in an unbounded flood of bliss, a spacious sea of glory; lost in wonder amidst ineffable divinities, and transported with the raptures of seraphic harmony.

The first and reigning glory is, that Jehovah keeps his royal court in person here. His dwelling-place is enriched with the richest profusion of his love, with the brightest displays of his goodness; and, while all his saints rejoice in his excellent glory, what ardour

glows in every soul, what rapture swells in every song! O the adorable displays of his perfections! the manifestations of his goodness, the outlettings of his love! and the intercourse that is between him and his hidden ones! The fulness of the Father, treasured up in the Son, dispensed by the Spirit, is the crown-charter of the kingdom above, where the royal privilege of every inhabitant carries him to the utmost extent of communicable glory

What buildings are these? They be the palaces of the great King, the mansions of our Immanuel, of which there are many in his Father's house; and they are all magnificent, founded in grace, and furnished with glory: "The beams of our house are cedar, and the rafters are fir." Age shall never enter here, and nothing shall decay: "The King is held in the galleries." What a beautiful city is the New Jerusalem, the mother of us all! of which the Lord God and the Lamb are the light! How glorious are its gates, where pearls of essential beauty sparkle! and all the attributes of God blaze divinely bright!

There trophies of eternal victory lie beneath Immanuel's feet. He is our elder brother, our near kinsman, and our husband. This is the relation from which our grandeur springs, our being married into the high and honourable family of heaven. What a blessing is it to be brethren to the Son of God, and hear him to us in that capacity declare his Father's name! O the assimilating beams of glory that dart from his eyes, and shoot likeness with the ray! We see him, and are like him; we are like him, and love him, and are eternally happy! No wonder that the world was such a waste and howling wilderness, such a dry and thirsty desert, such a land of heat and drought, compared to the heavenly Canaan, where the rivers of pleasures overflow their banks for ever.

Why did we expect joys on earth? Our mortal frame could not have borne the transports of eternal day; yea, here it is all we can to bear the brightness of his beams. O love! O rapture! O ecstatic joys! O everlasting heaven! The general assembly, now met on the holy Mount Zion, the joy of the whole heaven, is an assembly of gods, all sons of the Highest, and the Lord God

of gods, the Lord God of gods, dwell among them! O ineffable glory! to dwell forever in the royal pavilion of heaven, in most intimate communion with the King eternal, immortal, and invisible!

What rapturous notes are these I hear? The song of Moses and the Lamb. My soul dissolves in praise, my spirit pours out in sweet hosannas, all heaven is melody, angels accent the song. O the charming anthems of glory! O the high strokes of the harpers round the throne! The song of the redeemed is the song of songs. We will sing to thee while we live, while we have our being we will bless thee. Weeping endured for a little, through the short night of time, but joy is come in the morning of the resurrection; and we have a song in this solemn assembly, and gladness, being come into the house of the Lord. Our happiness shall utter hallelujahs, our glory sing thy praise, and never be silent. Sing ye inhabitants of eternity, shout from the mountains of myrrh, and hills of frankincense, where ye rest, and are refreshed for ever. And shall these ravishing hosannas never end, these songs of love never cease? O life of angels! O warbles of eternal noon! for we rest not day nor night to sing of all thy glory.

Say, was I ever sad? What although since now my sackcloth is loosed, and I am girt with gladness. Here, to the glory of the bounteous Giver, we have all things common. This God, this glory, this upmaking all, my fellow-saints, without my loss, is yours, and, without any prejudice to you, is also wholly mine. Here we drink at life's immortalising stream, and with eternal joy draw water out of the wells of salvation. From the rivers of thy pleasures, O God! thou wilt make us largely drink: "Eat, O friends! drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved! for in my presence there is fulness of joy, and at my right-hand are pleasures for evermore."

O thou that art as my brother, I have found thee; not within the promise, not in the ordinances, as in the days of my flesh, but without, in the most ample displays of thy eternal love, in the open fields of glory, and shall kiss thee, and not be despised. I have found thee, and shall hold thee, and not let thee go through all eternity.

Here we receive out of his fulness, and grace for grace, and glory for glory. Our possession is worthy of our liberal Giver. We have a kingdom which cannot be moved, an inheritance undefiled, and that fadeth not away; a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. We have garments of glory, a crown of righteousness, a crown of life; the tree of life to feed upon, the fountain of life to drink of, and the garden of God to walk in. We have life above the reach of death, health secured from sickness, and pleasure without pain. Our bodies are immortal, our souls immaculate, our senses sanctified, our conceptions spiritualised, our faculties enlarged, and our whole soul replenished with divinity. Our past bliss is present with us in the sweet remembrance, our present bliss entrances in the enjoyment, and our future bliss is present with us in the full assurance of our eternal felicity. Thus we are for ever blessed to the highest degree. We are above all fear, beyond anxiety and doubt, and fixed above all change. Our service is sincere, our adorations ardent, our knowledge profound and satisfying. Rapture rushes in at every part; our eyes are ravished with seeing the King in his beauty, our ears with hearing the songs of the inner temple, our nose with the fragrance of the Rose of Sharon, the Plant of renown; our feet with standing in his holy place; our hands with handling of the word of life; and our mouth with the wine of our Beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing our souls to shout aloud, and the lips of us who were once silent in death, asleep in the grave, to sing, and never cease. Our fruition of his fulness, our vision of his perfections and glory, our interest in his offices and relations, our union to the incarnate WORD, our communion with all the persons of the glorious Godhead, and our participation with the divine nature, constitute our most exalted bliss, and are the heaven of heavens.

These are the years of the right-hand of the Most High. Here He, of whom Solomon in all his majesty was once a languid type, is crowned with all the brightness of his Mediatorial glory; and this is the day of eternal espousals, the day of the gladness of his heart. The Father and the Bridegroom are come, and the

Spirit and the Bride are come, and let every one that heareth come to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, for all things are now ready. The banquet is prepared, and the guests are bid; the table is furnished, and the company set down; and blessed are they that eat the bread of life in the kingdom of God. O the sweetness of the Lamb of God! O the honied excellency of the true manna, that came down to earth to feed us there, and is taken up to heaven to feast us here. O the table discourse of glory! O the melting language of mutual love! we never knew what communion was till here. The banquet shall never be ended, the table never drawn, the guests shall never scatter, they shall go no more out, and come no more in.

The Father hath loved the Son, and given all things into his hand; the Son hath loved us, and given us all things richly to enjoy. The Father hath loved us as his own Son! Love is love here indeed! O the sacred familiarity that is in love! O the kindness of Immanuel's heart! Father, I will that those whom thou hast brought hither, see all my glory which thou hast given me, for they love me, and delight in my glory. Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that we love thee, and that our happiness is in beholding thy glory. O what torrents of eternal love teem from the throne into our souls! Now, we know that God is love, and in his love he rests towards us. And dost thou delight in the work of thine hands? Art thou charmed with the love of thy creatures? "Turn away your eyes, for they have overcome me!" Nay, Lord, we have fixed our eyes on thee, O thou that art fairer than the sons of men, than the angels of God; and there they shall be fixed and feast for ever. Our eyes shall dwell on thee, and our hearts fly out at our eyes.

Glory is a native of the better country. Glory has her habitation in our land. Darkness is debarred the regions of eternal day, and sorrow banished the realms of bliss. Our winter is over and gone, our spring is in perpetual verdure, our summer in eternal bloom; our Sun is in his height, our day is at its noon, and there is no night here. Our love is in the flame, and our well-beloved is ours, and we are his; he feedeth among the lillies. The day is broke, and the shadows blown

away, and we walk with him in white; yea, we are changed from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord that dwells in us, and are called up into the mount of communion, from which we never shall come down; and here we talk and speak face to face with him, as a man speaketh unto his friend; and our hearts burn within us, while he talks with us, and opens up to us the mystery of redemption, the wonders of his love.

Here we search with serenity, satisfaction, and joy, into the secrets of eternity, into all the deep things of God. The nonplussing contingencies of our transitory life shine now with harmony, wisdom, and goodness through the whole; and, tnough we were stumbled at our own afflictions, yet now we adore his conduct, and confess, that we could not wisely inquire concerning the matter below. Now religion triumphs, piety is vested in her honorary robes, and all those that stood boldly up for the honour of the King, when trampled upon by his demented enemies, ride on white horses in his glorious train, clothed in the garments of salvation with a fair crown upon their head, and the royal proclamation made from the throne, Thus shall it be done through eternity to the men whom the King delighteth to honour.

Blessed are the men whom thou hast thus chosen, and made approach unto thee. Surely we are abundantly satisfied with thy goodness, which thou preparedst for us when we were poor, with the divine bounty of thy temple. Thou hast crowned the year of thy grace, with thine eternity of glory. The hills of glory rejoice on every side, and the heavens shout and sing to thee, for thou hast made them glad. Though our enemies rode over our heads in the days of trouble and turmoil, yet we had power over them in the dawn of glory, in the morning of the resurrection. Though we did pass through the fires of persecution, through the waters of adversity, yea, through the rapid stream of dissolution at last, yet thou hast brought us to a wealthy land, so that we have a goodly heritage; and the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, being led to the goodly mount which thy right-hand had purchased for us, O Immanuel!

Here will I pay my vows through all eternity, which I spake in the day of my trouble, in the land of my pilgrimage. O love! never to be forgot, which has brought me safely through so many winding labyrinths, and crooked paths, in sight of so many enemies, in spite of a tempting devil, in spite of the accusation of my sins, the rebellion of my lusts, the carnality of my affections, and the weakness of all my graces, to stand at last for ages on an even place, and bless God in the congregation of sinless adorers!

Here our vision is full and assimilating, our fruition satisfying and solacing, and our communion free and uninterrupted. O how rapturous to begin converse with the God of glory for eternity? We have found him in Bethel, in his own house, in his own heaven, and here we speak with him. Yea, we weep for joy, and pour out acclamations of ecstasy, since he will never go away. We have power over the uncreated Angel, and in the struggles of seraphic love, we wrestle and prevail with him, that he shall never, never, never leave us. O the pleasure that is in his presence! O the exuberant rivers of joy that flow at his right-hand! How much better is his love than life, and the light of his countenance than the possession of ten thousand creations!

Honor only dwells here. O deluded mortals! to strive so for empty names, and transitory epithets below! For honor and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Where are all the shining sons of honor now, all the men of fame? Ah! they are wrapt up in midnight darkness, while the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. With what envious eye, and angry heart, did our haters, who accounted us the refuse and offscouring of all things, see us, in our princely robes, and royal apparel, mount our thrones by divine command, to judge impenitent men, and apostate angels? How could we ever complain of being hated of all men for thy sake? Why did we ever think much of the most cruel mockings, of the calumniating lip, or slandering tongue? Even then we were more than recompensed by the testimony of a good conscience, and tokens of peace from the eternal throne. But, O! what a reward is this, that the ridicule of a

few days should be repaid with ineffable renown in the sight of all the angels of God, through all the days of eternity! This is the true and triumphant state of glory. O! what is it to reign on high with the King of kings! to sit down with him on his throne for all ages, and never be degraded from that divine dignity!

O eternity! once the comfort of our longing expectations, now the transport of our enlarged souls! For we are ever with the Lord, seeing his unclouded face, wearing his divine name, drinking at the streams of his pleasures, eating of his hidden manna, sitting beneath the Tree of life, basking under the beams of the Sun of righteousness, singing hallelujahs to him that loved us, that washed us in his blood, and brought us hither, sharing in his dominions, and dividing the spoil, for the lame share the prey with the Almighty Conqueror. Here we dwell in God, and he in us; we know his love, are transformed into his glorious likeness, and made partakers of his divine nature. O state of complete happiness, and consummate bliss, only to be apprehended in the possession, known in the enjoyment, and understood in its eternal duration! Now the day has broken, the shadows fled away, and all is eternal noon! Not a desire I had, but, larger than its dimensions, is fulfilled; not a request but, more than it contained, is granted; and all my soul is satisfied and replenished with the divine plenitude of thy superabundant goodness.

Come, my Beloved, let us hold the most intimate communion; here will I give thee my loves. Blessed I! What glories blaze! what wonders rise! what ardors glow within! All is light and glory, all joy and exultation! all is transport and praise, all astonishment and wonder! all is vision and likeness, all fruition and satisfaction! all is God! God and the Lamb are all in all, to all the heavenly nations, through ages all. Amen!

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